Bridge

Developments

Robertson &
Hyde-Wollaston

BRIDGE

DEVELOPMENTS

FROM

"The Higher Grammar of Bridge"

BY

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AND

A. HYDE-WOLLASTON

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PREFACE

THESE **"developments"** of modern scientific Bridge are taken from a forthcoming work entitled **"The Higher Grammar of Bridge."** Before its appearance it may be hoped that some of the many anomalies and imperfections of this very excellent game will be set right, and that some definite pronouncement will have been made on such moot points as the **Heart Convention, the Discard Dilemma, the Blind Lead,** etc.

The following pages deal mainly with the theory of the game, because sound theory is of the first importance at Bridge — a good deal more important even than correct play. This is especially true of the declarations. By incorrect play a trick or two may be lost but an unsound declaration usually involves the loss of the game, and the rubber inclines strongly in the same direction.
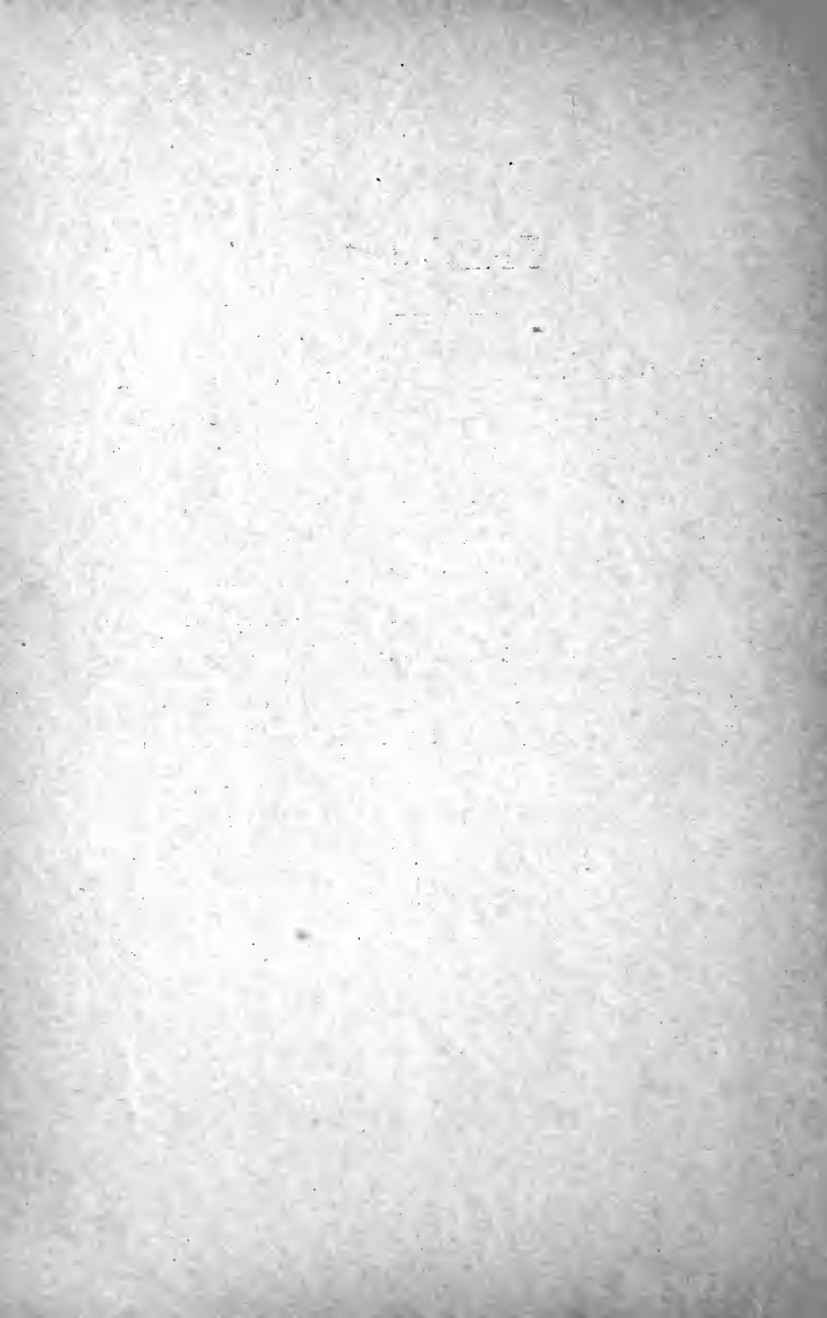
BRIDGE

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Description of the Game

Bridge may be played by two, three, or four players. The four-handed game is the one most usually played and the most interesting form of the game.

Two Packs of fifty-two cards each are used and they rank: A K Q J 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 and 2.

The Players cut for partners and for the deal. The lowest cut of the four has the deal as well as the choice of the cards and seats. The two lowest play against the two highest. The players must cut from the same pack, and the ace is the lowest card in cutting.

The Dealer's Partner after shuffling the pack selected by the dealer places it before the pone to be cut.

The Dealer distributes the cards to the four players in rotation, beginning with the player on his left. The last card must not be turned up but dealt face downwards to the dealer. There is no misdeal, but there must be a new deal if a card be found faced in the pack, or the last card dealt does not fall to the dealer, or the pack is proved to be imperfect or incorrect.

The Dealer has the right to name the suit that shall be trumps during his deal, or to elect to play *without*

trumps. He may also *leave* the declaration to his dummy partner.

He is Guided in His Decision by the varying trick values of the different suits, and by *the object of the game*, which is to win two games of thirty points each before the adversaries contrive to do so.

A Game consists of thirty points obtained by tricks alone, exclusive of any points scored for honors. Only one game may be scored in a deal, but the hands are not abandoned after the thirty points necessary for game have been scored. The players winning them get the full benefit of all the points they may make.

The Rubber is the best of three games, but if the first two games be won by the same side, the third game is not played.

With a Declared Trump each of the four suits has a different value. When the declaration is

> Spades, each trick over six counts.... 2
> Clubs, each trick over six counts.... 4
> Diamonds, each trick over six counts.. 6
> Hearts, each trick over six counts.... 8

In Playing without Trumps each trick over six counts 12.

The Honors consist of the A K Q J and 10 of the trump suit, and when there are no trumps they consist of the four aces.

Honors are thus Reckoned

Three honors count *twice* the value of the trump suit trick.

Four honors divided count *four times*, etc.

Five honors divided count *five times*, etc.

Four honors in one hand count *eight times*, etc.

Four honors in one hand and the fifth in partner's
hand count *nine times*, etc.

Five honors in one hand count *ten times*, etc.

Without Trumps

Three aces in one hand or divided count.......... 30

Four aces divided count........................ 40

Four aces in one hand count.................... 100

If a Player Holds no Card of the Trump Suit he and
his partner score for **CHICANE** twice the value of the
trump suit trick.

If a Player and His Partner make, independently of
any tricks taken for the revoke penalty,

(*i*) All thirteen tricks, they score for **GRAND SLAM**
40 points.

(*ii*) Twelve tricks, they score for **LITTLE SLAM** 20
points.

At the End of the Rubber the total scores for *tricks*,
honors, *chicane*, and *slam* obtained by each side are
added up, 100 points are added to the score of the
winners of the rubber, and the difference between the
two scores is the number of points won and lost on the
rubber.

As the Trick Scores alone contribute to the winning
of the rubber they are kept separately from the honor
scores. The accompanying example of a scoring sheet
explains how the scores are kept:

(a) W deals and declares hearts. W X make 3 by
        cards, *i. e.*, 24 below the line, and have four
        honors divided, *i. e.*, 32 above the line.

(b) Y deals and declares no trumps. Y Z score 60
        for tricks but nothing for honors
        as the aces were divided. A line
        is drawn to show that the first
        game is completed.

(c) X deals and leaves it to W who
        declares diamonds. W X make
        4 by cards, 24 below, and have
        four honors in one hand, 48
        above. Y has chicane for which
        Y Z score 12 above.

(d) Z deals and leaves it to Y who
        declares spades. W doubles and
        W X make 3 by cards, 12 below,
        and have simple honors, 4 above.
        A line is again drawn to show
        that the game has been completed.

W X	Y Z
(e) 100	
(e) 20	
(e) 32	
(d) 4	
(c) 48	
(a) 32	(c) 12
(a) 24	(b) 60
(c) 24	
(d) 12	
(e) 48	
344	72
−72	
272	

(e) W deals and declares hearts. W X make 6 by
        cards, 48 below, and hold four honors divided
        32. They score 20 for *little slam* and 100 points
        for the rubber bonus.

The total score made by W X amounts to 344, which,
after deducting 72 points scored by Y Z, leaves them
winners of 272 points.

After the dealer or his partner has made the declara-
tion the adversaries may enhance the original value of

the tricks by *doubling*. The dealer's left-hand adversary has the first right, and should he not care to double he should ask his partner "May I play?" His partner may either answer "Yes" or "I double."

It is well to bear in mind that the element of doubling has been introduced into the game, not for the purpose of gambling, but in order to penalize a rash declaration. And in order to punish a reckless double, the dealing side has the right to redouble the increased value of the trick.

This process of doubling and redoubling the original value of the trick may be carried on indefinitely, although at many clubs a reasonable limit, 100 points, is fixed as the maximum value of a trick.

After the doubling business has been disposed of by reaching the limit, or by one side expressing themselves content, the dealer's left-hand adversary leads a card, and dummy *then* lays his cards down on the table face upwards.

The duty of playing the hand and of claiming any penalties devolves on the dealer unaided by his partner.

Dummy must take no further part in the play of the hand except the mechanical one of playing from his hand any card named by the dealer; but he may ask the dealer if he has a card of the suit which he may have renounced. He is not allowed, however, to indicate to the dealer the hand from which the dealer has to lead; nor is he at liberty, should the dealer have led from the wrong hand, to draw attention to the error.

General Principles of the Declaration

The Declaration depends on the strength or trick-taking value of the hand and is affected by

(1) The state of the score.

(2) The honor-value of the hand.

The Guiding Principle is that if you have a reasonable certainty of scoring on the deal it is to your interest to make the points as costly as possible; and conversely, when you have no hope of making a score you should aim at incurring the least possible loss.

The Great Advantage You Possess as Dealer is a knowledge of the cards in your favor as well as those against you as soon as dummy's hand is laid on the table. This will enable you to combine forces with dummy in a manner that is not possible to partners who are ignorant of the help they can afford each other. The knowledge adds enormously to your strength and, as we shall see later, is especially telling in playing without trumps.

When You Have the Deal You Have the Attack, and experience has abundantly proved that it will pay you in the long run to adopt a forward policy. You have always a right to expect your partner to hold his fair one-third share of the good cards not in your hand, and it is for you to select the declaration that will yield the largest number of points.

Your Object Should Be to make the most of your deal, and, whenever possible, to make 30 trick-points or game, — which is a step towards the rubber. The shortest road to game is to play without trumps, and, next to no trumps, hearts offers the best chance of scoring game on the deal. Diamonds, although an attacking declaration or one on the border-line, offers a poor chance of game, except with preponderating strength, as you need five by cards with your score love.

When You Have Made up Your Mind that it will not pay you to select any of these three attacking or offensive declarations, there is no reason to rush off with a confession of weakness and to declare a black suit. Your own hand may be too poor to attack successfully, but the thirteen cards held by your partner have to be considered. It calls for the exercise of no little judgment to know exactly when to pass the declaration. Even at love all theoreticians are not agreed as to the minimum strength on which the declaration should be left to dummy.

The Tendency of Timid Players is to leave the onus of the decision to dummy unless they see their way clearly to making a score. This is not sound bridge because dummy is in a far less favorable position to make an attacking declaration. Any little weakness in his hand will be seen as soon as his cards are laid on the table, and unless he holds a hand well above the average it is his duty to make an inexpensive declaration.

The Result is that hands which in combination would have proved excellent no-trumpers are wasted on spades, because the dealer would adopt the backward policy of passing the make.

Such Players Fail to Appreciate the Importance of the Deal and lose more by timid passes than any amount of bad play could cost them. A point to be kept in view is that even with an average hand you have a good chance of success in an attacking declaration because you have the advantage of not only seeing but commanding two hands. With a hand, therefore, above the average your chances are greatly improved, and if you pass the declaration, dummy's hand going on the probabilities will be below the average, and he will be compelled to declare defensively.

In Other Words You Relinquish the Attack by Passing although the balance of chances is in your favor, which is manifestly unsound.

THE HONOR-VALUE OF THE HAND

The Average Player is Very Apt to ignore the honor-value of the hand. The trick-value of the hand alone contributes towards the winning of the rubber, and the main struggle is to secure the 100 points bonus to be added to the score of the winners of the first two games. But over anxiety to win a game often results in the declarer neglecting points he might have secured in honors.

Points Scored Above the Line will not serve to win the rubber but they will have an important bearing

in the ultimate reckoning. The ever-varying conditions of the game make it impossible to estimate the relative value of points gained above and below the line in each deal with any approach to exactness, but elaborate calculations go to show that in average positions their relative values are as three is to one. This point should not be lost sight of when you are tempted to declare no trumps without an ace, or hearts with only one honor. It will be discussed in detail later.

DECLARING TO THE SCORE

After the Love All Stage the declaration must be adapted to changes in the state of the score. When the hand admits of an alternative declaration or is of a doubtful character the score must decide whether an offensive or a defensive declaration should be made.

The score includes the state of the rubber as well as the state of the game. With a game to the good or with the score a stage ahead of the adversaries, a defensive policy is advisable. But with the scores reversed an aggressive attitude should be adopted.

The Main Points to be Kept in Mind in Making a Declaration Are

(*i*) If you have a hand above average strength you should adopt a forward policy and not relinquish the attack by passing;

(*ii*) You should not neglect the honor-value of the hand; and

(*iii*) You should not fail to look at the score before you make the declaration.

The Robertson Rule

In order to take full advantage of the deal, the chances that the expensive declarations offer for making game should be first examined.

As the value of each trick is highest in no trumps and it is the shortest road to game, your first thought on looking at your hand should be: "Am I strong enough to play without trumps?"

As dealer you not only see but command two hands, and the enormous advantage of knowing what cards are in your favor, where finesses are practicable, and what suits have a chance of being established, is alone sufficient to ensure the odd trick in no trumps with all-round average hands.

But this is not by itself a sufficient reason for calling no trumps with only an average hand. The odd trick in your deal is of more value to the adversaries than to yourself, because if they manage to score in your deal it will give them a greatly increased chance of making game when it is their turn to declare trumps. If there is any doubt about the odd trick always make it a principle to prevent the adversaries from reaching one of the "useful" stages when they have the deal to go on with.

It is therefore not sound to declare no trumps unless your hand contains at least one probable trick above the average, *i. e.*, unless the chances are decidedly in favor of your making at least the odd trick.

There is another point to be considered. The lead being with the adversaries, if you are not protected in the majority of the suits, that is, three out of the four, it may happen that each of your opponents has a long suit and you may not get the lead in time to save the game.

The general principle, therefore, on which it would be sound to declare no trumps is that your hand should contain one very probable trick above the average, with three suits protected. A suit is not absolutely protected in no trumps unless it contains an ace or one of the following combinations:

King	King	King	Qn.	Qn.	Jack
7	10	Qn.	10	Jack	10
6	3		3	3	3
5			2		2

Theoretically an average hand contains $3\frac{1}{4}$ tricks. Your hand taken with your partner's will on the average take $6\frac{1}{2}$ tricks. You may count upon your partner holding his fair one-third share of the good cards not in your hand, and when your hand contains one very probable trick above the average your combined hands will take at least seven tricks ($4\frac{1}{4}+\frac{1}{3}$ of $8\frac{3}{4}=7\frac{1}{6}$), that is, you have a right to expect the odd trick, and may score two by cards.

It is very important but not always easy to know what is an average hand. There are four aces, kings, queens, etc., and the hand that contains an ace, a king, a queen, a jack, and a ten, *i. e.*, a card of each denomination, may be regarded as a typical average hand. But this arrangement is not usual. A hand may contain no ace or king and yet be of average strength.

Without a measure of value it is very difficult, in the case of a mixed hand, to know whether it is above or below average strength. To avoid this difficulty the following scale of values, known as the "Robertson Rule," is laid down for the purpose of calculating very nearly the exact strength of any hand:

Ace	=	7
King	=	5
Queen	=	3
Jack	=	2
Ten	=	1

Total of an average hand = 18

Eighteen may be regarded as the standard of value of an average hand. The value (5) assigned to the K as compared with the other bridge honors is a fraction too much, and those of the Q J and 10 too little, but these differences are quite inappreciable in actual play, and may be safely disregarded. It should be remembered that this scale of values, based on the mathematical laws of chance, is mainly intended for

THE ROBERTSON RULE

the purpose of calculating the strength of a hand with
a view to declaring no trumps.

For the benefit of vacillators we will discuss this
valuation at some length in a footnote* which the be-
ginner need not puzzle over.

Having determined the standard value of an average
hand 18, the conclusion we arrive at is that with one
ace $(18+7=25)$, king $(18+5=23)$, or queen $(18+3
=21)$ above average strength, *i. e.*, with 21 points or
over, and with three suits protected, it would be sound
to declare no trumps. Remember that 21 points is the
minimum strength on which it would be sound with the
score at love all to declare no trumps, and three suits
must be protected.

This scale of values should not be applied to a
singleton ace or king, or an unguarded queen, jack, or

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*Every card has a threefold value:

(1) Its aggressive or trick-taking value.

(2) Its obstructive value, *i. e.*, its power to prevent one or more
adverse tricks.

(3) Its protective, *i. e.*, its power to help other friendly cards to
take tricks.

What is the aggressive or trick-taking value of say a guarded king
in your hand without the ace of the same suit? There are three
hands in one of which the ace must be, *i. e.*, your partner has one
chance out of three of holding the ace. Again, if your king is guarded
it should make a trick if the ace is held by the adversary to your right,
that is, there are two chances out of three that your king will make a
trick. Assuming the trick-taking value of the ace at 1, the abstract
trick-taking value of the king is therefore in average positions, as-
suming that it is guarded, two out of three.

The trick-taking value of the Q J and 10 may be deduced in like
manner. In average positions, assuming that it is guarded, the queen
has four chances out of nine, the jack eight out of twenty-seven, and the
ten sixteen out of eighty-one of taking a trick. Reckoning the
value $(\frac{32}{243})$ of the second Dutch honor, the nine, would seriously

ten. *But every honor in a guarded suit must be given
its full value.*

A singleton ace, although a certain protection in one
suit and a consideration as regards the honor-value of
the hand, loses virtue enormously in no trumps, and
should be reckoned at 4 only. Similarly a singleton
king should be reckoned at 2 only (if your partner has
not the ace it will force an adverse ace) and an un-
guarded queen at 1.

Singleton Ace..............	=	4
Singleton King	=	2
Unguarded Queen.........	=	1

complicate matters, but it is a card by no means to be despised in no
trumps.

The value of a card, in so far as its power to prevent an adverse
trick and its power to help friendly forces are concerned, is modified
by so many circumstances of position and play that it would be idle
to lay down an exact scale of values. Similarly the trick-taking
worth of a card largely depends on what is termed the fall of the
cards, but in average positions the abstract threefold relative values
of the cards in a gradually descending scale from the ace downwards
are relatively:

Ace	=	81
King	=	54
Queen	=	36
Jack	=	24
Ten	=	16

A possible objection to this scale of values is that only bridge
honors are taken into account, whereas small cards also score
tricks. When a small card scores a trick (especially in no trumps)
it can be proved to be due to the protective or obstructive value of
one or more of the bridge honors. Remember that this scale is
mainly intended for the purpose of estimating the strength of a hand
with a view to calling no trumps. There is no question in no trumps
of a two of trumps ruffing an adverse ace. What you want to know
is "How much above the average is my hand?" This scale will
make the answer easy.

An unguarded jack or ten need not be taken into account.*

The advantages of a measure of value for determining a no-trump hand are enormous. If we apply the test to the following hands we will find that they should all be played without trumps:

 = 12

 = 10

 = 3
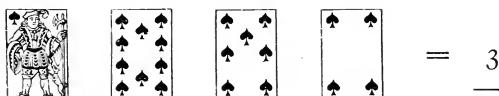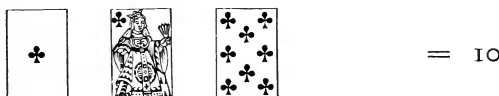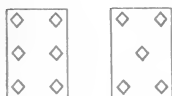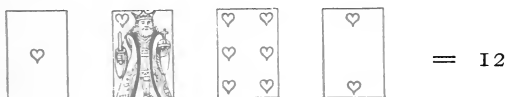
Total 25

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*To tail off into refinements:

Ace with one other	=	6
King " " "	=	3
Queen " " "	=	1
Jack with two others	=	1

In practise it is only necessary to remember that every honor in a guarded suit of not less than three cards should be given its full value.
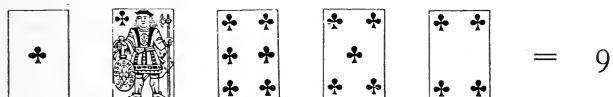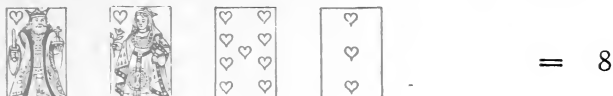
= 10

= 8

= 7
—

Total. 25

= 8

= 7

= 10
—

Total. 25

$$= 8$$

$$= 8$$

$$= 9$$

—

Total 25

$$= 5$$

$$= 12$$

$$= 1$$

$$= 7$$

—

Total 25

 = 7

 = 5

 = 1

 = 12

Total.........25

These hands come up to 25, *i. e.*, seven points (an ace) above average strength, 18. They may be regarded as specimens of fine no-trumpers. With two aces* there is always a probability — two chances out of three — of scoring 30 above the line, which is about one-third of the rubber bonus 100.

Hands containing two aces, not singletons or doubletons, and a third suit absolutely guarded usually make the soundest no-trumpers if they total up to 21 and there is no decided strength in a red suit. As we shall see later a hand well above average strength is not

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*The honor-value of :

2 Aces .... = 2

3 " .... = 4

necessarily a no-trumper. There may be both more profit and more safety in a red trump declaration.

With four aces ($7 \times 4 = 28$) there can be no doubt about the declaration. With three aces ($7 \times 3 = 21$), unless there is sufficient strength in a red suit to score game, or a very large honor score, the hand should be played without trumps. Besides the honor score (30) and three certain tricks, the protective and obstructive value of the aces are so great that the hand may be regarded as one very probable trick above average strength.

The value 7 assigned to the ace does not represent its trick-taking value alone, but its combined three-fold value. It may at first sight appear that as an A K Q held in the same hand are equally valuable in no trumps they should be reckoned at 7 each. As, however, the protective value of the ace converts the king into a certain trick, and the combined protective values of the ace and king help the queen to take a trick, their true values are 7, 5, and 3 respectively.

The following hands are generally considered good enough for no trumps with the score love all:

 = 8

 = 5

 = 8

 —

Total.........21

 = 10

 = 3

 = 3

 = 5
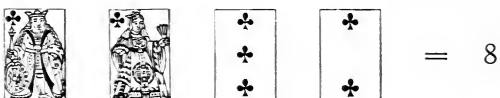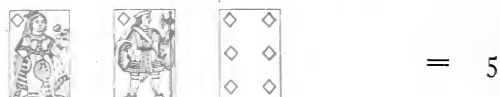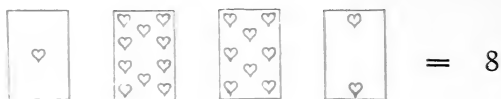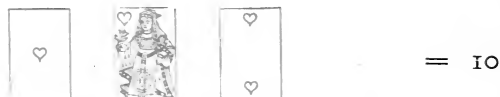
Total.........21

= 3

= 6

= 12
—

Total 21

= 9

= 6

= 6

—

Total 21

= 7

= 6

= 8

—

Total. 21

= 6

= 8

= 7

—
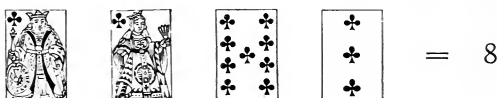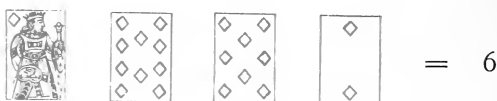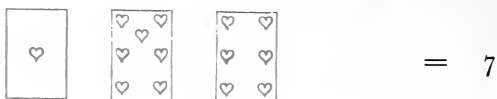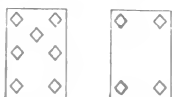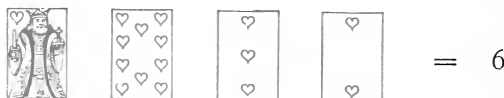
Total. 21

Remove even the lowest honor, the ten, from any one of these hands and it will no longer be good enough for no trumps, as it will fall below the standard no-trumper 21. These hands contain only a single ace each and are the minimum strength on which you should risk no trumps.

Without an ace it is very seldom sound to make it no trumps. Besides the remote chance of four aces being in one hand against you, there is a probability of losing 30 for honors. At love all or with the score in your favor no trumps should not be declared unless the hand totals up to 25. But when only the odd trick is needed to score game, or when the adversaries' score is so far advanced that only a bold no-trumper will save the game or rubber, the risk of an adverse honor score may be accepted with a hand that totals up to at least 21.

The following hand is fully a king and a queen above average strength and comes up to 27:

 = 7

 = 5

 = 8

 = 7
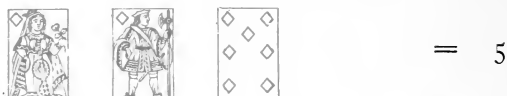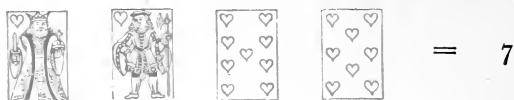
Total.........27

It is a sound no-trumper at almost any point of the score. The other three hands must hold four aces, a king, two queens, a jack, and four tens, or a total of 45 points. The probabilities are that dummy will hold his fair share of the good cards not in your hand, that is $\frac{45}{3} = 15$. This 15 and your 27 total up to 42. Playing on the probabilities these two hands are as much superior in trick-taking power to the adversaries as 42 is to 30 (4 : 3). A superiority of 7 to 6 is all that is necessary to score the odd trick, and owing to the dealer's advantages two by cards is more than probable — with a fair prospect of game. As already pointed out, besides a possibility of four aces being in one hand against you there is a likelihood of losing 30 for honors, but there is at least an equal chance of scoring

24 for tricks if not the game. In all doubtful cases the state of the score must decide the declaration.

It should be noted that 21 is the minimum strength on which no trumps should be called with the score love all — this minimum being increased or decreased according to the state of the score. When the score is decidedly in your favor, *i. e.*, you are 24 or over, unless you hold a fairly unbeatable no-trumper (24 or over) you should search your hand to see whether you have not a reasonable prospect of scoring game on a safer and less expensive declaration. But with the score dangerously against you a 20 hand or two five-card suits with two aces, or a six-card suit headed by ace, king, queen, is good enough to risk no trumps on. There is nothing like a bold no-trumper for pulling a game out of the fire.

Sporting No-Trumpers

WE have seen that with a hand totalling 21 and three suits protected you should play without trumps. Besides these classical no-trumpers, you may hold a hand strong enough for no trumps, although unprotected in the majority of the suits. Even good players miss many fine opportunities at bridge in avoiding a possible disaster.

In the infancy of the game players generally held altogether exaggerated notions of the strength necessary for a no-trumps declaration. The chief advantage of the deal was thought to lie in the dealer's privilege to name his longest suit trumps. Very gradually it dawned upon the bridgite that playing no trumps afforded openings for assistance from dummy's hand in all the suits, and that any long suit held by him would turn out a mine of wealth. While in a trump declaration the declarer's long suit is usually the partner's short suit, in no trumps, all four suits being equally valuable, this is an advantage rather than a drawback.

Moreover, as you command two hands your knowledge of the twenty-six cards in your favor is most telling in this declaration, because it enables you to know immediately what suits have a chance of being established.

The adversaries, on the other hand, have no means of knowing till towards the end of the game what help they could afford each other in any of the suits. Having no notion of the direction in which their strength lies, they cannot combine forces effectively against you, and are at a miserable disadvantage in making discards, in leading, and throughout the play of the hand.

As you have no ignorance of this kind to hamper you, your jacks, tens, and nines, though of little account in a trump declaration, are towers of strength in playing no trumps. Rightly, therefore, to appreciate the importance of the deal, no opportunity should be missed of playing no trumps.

THE SEVEN RULE

You should go no trumps with:

4 tricks and 3 suits guarded
5 " " 2 " "
6 " " 1 suit "

The declaration will in fact be theoretically correct, if the number of tricks you hold *plus* the number of suits guarded come to seven or more.

The first case is covered by the Robertson rule. In the second case there are two unguarded suits. A five-trick hand should always be regarded as a strong attacking hand, and unless he has decided strength in hearts or four honors in diamonds, either of which would be a safer declaration, the dealer should have little hesitation in playing without trumps even with

absolutely unprotected suits. The chances are that
dummy will hold a guard in each of these suits.

When the dealer holds five certain tricks in his hand
dummy is entitled to a third of the remaining eight
tricks, and owing to the dealer's advantages in com-
bining the two hands, two by cards is very probable,
and a successful finesse or an extra trick in dummy's
hand must give him game.

If the dealer holds A K of clubs and A K Q of spades,
and we distribute the other probable trick-taking cards
among the other three hands, it will be found that the
dealer's chances of scoring game are immense, whereas
his chances of losing even 2 by cards are under two
per cent. And yet with this hand, which comes up to 27,
most players would unhesitatingly pass the declaration:

                                              = 12

                                              = 15
                                                 —
              Total 27

In the next hand your strong suits are red:
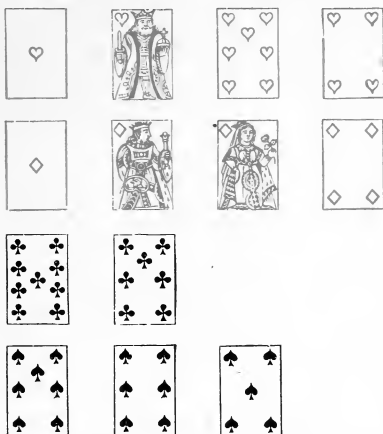
There is very little chance of dummy making an expensive declaration if it is left to him. He clearly has a very poor chance of naming a red trump or of playing without trumps. Even when your strong suits are black, if you leave it (see the hand on page 28), dummy is almost certainly unguarded in clubs and spades, so that no trumps would be out of the question. Unless he is able to declare a red trump, you would be missing an opportunity of making game, or at least a good score.

If his hand is good enough to declare a red trump, your combined hands have an excellent chance of scoring game in no trumps. The effect of passing the declaration with a hand above the average is so very imperfectly appreciated even by good players that it would be well to examine it a little further.

The remaining 39 cards, when dealt out, would probably arrange themselves something like this:
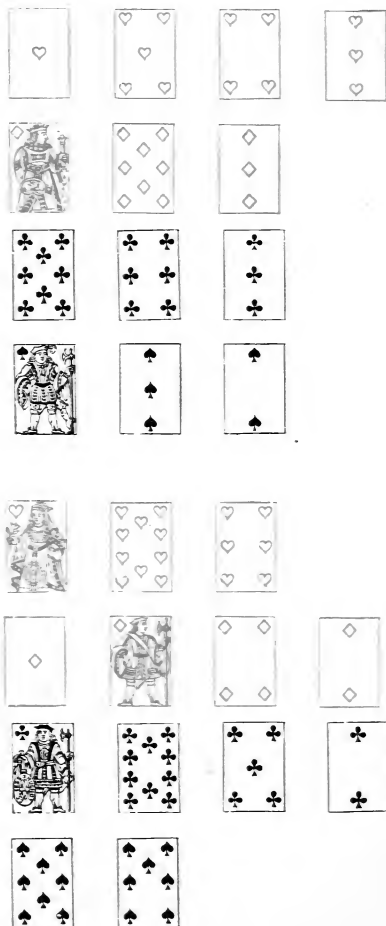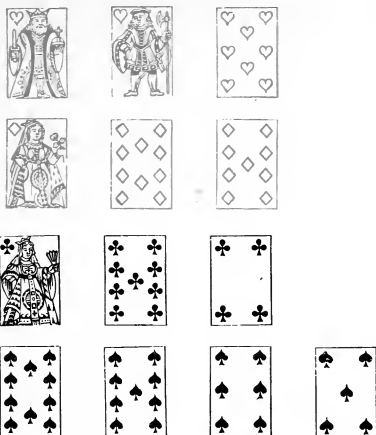
All these hands are below the average 18, but any one of them, fitted in with the dealer's 27, would make 2 by cards, if not the game, highly probable. Two by cards can be lost only if dummy holds a Yarborough.

This brings us to the third case. With six or more certain tricks (in a black suit, of course) even with three absolutely unprotected suits, the dealer should play no trumps at love all, or when the score is against him.

With the score in his favor, or with a game to the good, it is best to play safe and pass the make. Dummy may turn up a good red suit which will help to establish the dealer's suit; or he may hold strength to play no trumps which would fit in admirably with the dealer's hand; or he may have a poor hand and make it spades, which would be prudent. Dummy's declaration cannot hurt him and may be most useful.

Of course, with two suits guarded, the dealer need have no hesitation in declaring no trumps when one of them is a solid established suit. We have seen that with five certain tricks and two suits guarded, he should declare no trumps. The difference between two suits protected and only one protected is glaring and should be duly appreciated.

The secret of the declaration is that a long solid suit gives you a preponderating advantage in playing without trumps. You will, of course, make at least the same number of tricks with a trump declaration, and when your long suit is red, you should unhesitatingly name it trumps. When it is black, however, the question for decision is whether you should declare it as dealer and be content with 2 or 4 for each trick instead of 12, or leave it to your partner with the likelihood of his declaring spades when your long suit is clubs or *vice versa*.

With seven spades to the quart major and nothing else in the hand, dummy is entitled to an A K Q J 10, *i. e.*, he is almost certainly protected in two out of the three suits in which the dealer is unprotected.

It is clear that if in addition to one solid suit containing six or seven tricks, the dealer holds a probable card of re-entry in another suit, say a king singly guarded, it is comparatively safe to declare no trumps. The fact that the first card played will be a blind lead up to the dealer should not be lost sight of.

24-POINT NO-TRUMPERS

There is a third class of no-trumpers which does not come under the seven rule, and with which the declaration is usually left to dummy. These are hands which total up to 24 (more than a king above average strength) but have two suits either missing or unprotected.

= 13

= 11
—

Total 24

= 12

= 12

Total 24

= 12

= 12

Total 24

These are about as unfavorable 24-point hands as it is possible to construct, and yet they are all good enough for no trumps.

It is no good playing a timid game at bridge. If you have an opportunity of making a good score, but at some risk, provided the balance of chances is in your favor, in always accepting the risk you must come off well in the long run. If you wait till you are absolutely protected in three suits, and see your way clearly to making a score, you are sure to miss golden opportunities.

There is too great a tendency in modern bridge to shoulder dummy with the responsibility of the declaration. Taken altogether, the deal is a very important advantage, and you should make the most of it by taking the shortest road to game. When your hand is distinctly above the average, leaving the declaration means, as a rule, missing an opportunity of making game on the deal.

With any of the hands instanced, and in fact whenever your hand totals up to 24 and you do not hold four honors or very decided strength in a red suit, you should play without trumps sooner than pass the declaration.

Playing on the probabilities your partner will at least hold stoppers in your missing suit. If he holds strength in either or both the suits you are likely to do better at no trumps than at his suit. As "Ace of Spades" points out, "numberless games are lost by timid passes; hands which in combination would have proved fine no-trumpers are wasted on spades be-

cause the dealer will pass on what is really a no-trump hand. The dummy is greatly fettered in his declaration, and even with a 20-point hand is quite right to declare spades. Yet a combined strength of more than 40 points well played ought to mean game at no trumps."

In all these declarations with missing suits, it is assumed that the score is love all. When the score is against you, it is all the more reason why you should adopt aggressive tactics. If, on the other hand, your score is sufficiently advanced to win with a trump declaration, it is neither necessary nor wise to jeopardize the game.

Timid players do not like the element of uncertainty about these hands, but when the philosophy of the game is better understood, the so-called sporting tactics will be acknowledged to be paying tactics. So far as the uncertainty goes there are factors incalculable in actual play in a vast majority of hands that make success or failure problematical. The declaration should be made according to the law of probabilities, and no opportunities missed for fear of a possible disaster. It is for the judgment of the player to decide when the chances are in his favor and not to confound the possible with the probable.

It should always be borne in mind that the dealer and dummy can join forces in a way that is not possible to partners who are ignorant of the help they can give each other. This ignorance is especially fatal in no trumps. If the leader hold king, jack, ten of clubs,

and the third hand ace and queen, both partners are equally afraid to open the suit for fear of finding strength with the dealer. When after some rounds it is seen that the dealer will not touch the suit, the adversaries will probably infer that he wishes to be led up to. Only when the game is practically decided do they discover the cost of their caution. This ignorance is especially disadvantageous in making discards.

The dealer, on the other hand, knows exactly the strength of the combined hands, and what suits have a chance of being established, and he can order his play accordingly. Another great advantage lies in his ability to deceive the adversaries by playing false cards.

With a declared trump even average players find little difficulty in making all their probable tricks. Playing against a no-trumps declaration the best players are at a serious disadvantage. If therefore you wish to take a long chance, take it by all means at no trumps.

It should be noted that these declarations with missing suits apply mainly to the dealer. It is obviously no good having a long suit exposed if the hand is otherwise weak, because, it is not likely the adversaries will open with dummy's long suit.

The Spade Shield

WHEN to make an original protective declaration is a point on which many fine players are at variance. Before laying down an exact minimum of strength on which you should call spades at love all we will consider its advantages and disadvantages.

The points in favor of declaring defensively when your hand does not contain a single trick are:

(1) You prevent dummy from making an expensive declaration which is likely to result in a big adverse score if it does not cost you the game.

(2) The odd trick in your deal in any expensive declaration is more valuable to the adversaries than to you, because it would largely increase their chances of making game when it is their turn to make the declaration.

Against these two great advantages a defensive spade declaration has the following glaring disadvantages:

(1) By naming spades originally you plainly inform the adversaries that your hand is a very poor one. Throughout the game the eldest hand will lead up to you with confidence and both the adversaries by placing the lead with dummy, or by going through him, will make the most of their good cards.

(2) The chances are about two to one that you will be doubled and each trick will cost 4, so that losing 2 by cards will carry the adversaries' score to one of the useful stages.

(3) A trump declaration by dummy, if sound, may not be equally disastrous. Besides the remote chance of dummy holding four aces or four honors in a red suit, he has a chance of holding one long suit, which if made trumps might give you the odd trick.

It follows that while not securing the greatest amount of safety a *misère* declaration entirely kills the hope of a good score. The spade shield should therefore be sparingly used. It would be most useful to lay down a standard minimum of weakness for a defensive declaration with the score even or at love all.

This question of an original protective declaration is one in which there is much misapprehension, and it would be well to examine it in some detail.

In the first place, suppose you have no trick in your hand and leave the declaration to dummy. The chances are all in favor of dummy holding a hand above the average, *i. e.*, four tricks, which must tempt him to make an expensive declaration, usually no trumps. What is your expectation of making a score? To get the odd trick dummy's hand must contain seven tricks, *i. e.*, be superior to both the adversaries' hands taken together. Playing on the probabilities, he will make about four tricks, *i. e.*, you run a risk of losing 3 by cards, as you can give him no help. This practically means the loss of the game in no

trumps, or doubled hearts or diamonds. Your advantages as dealer will be *nil*, as you cannot get the hand to finesse, etc., and the strong hand exposed will help the adversaries to make the most of their good cards.

The rule for estimating the value of a hand given in a previous chapter might be usefully applied here. We have seen that counting 18 as the value of an average hand, the total value of the four hands is equal to 72. Let us suppose your hand contains only a guarded queen:

$$= 3$$

Total 3

This is a 3-point hand. The value of the other three hands will amount to $72-3=69$. Going strictly on the probabilities, dummy will hold one-third of the

good cards not with you, and his hand will total up to 23. This means that in the absence of very decided strength in a red suit he will declare no trumps and the result, as we have seen, will be the loss of the game. He *may* hold four aces and an unbeatable no-trumper, but even then to make the odd trick, his hand must be superior to both the adversaries' hands taken together.*

Therefore as loss is very probable, with a hand of zero expectation play to lose as little as possible. It is part of your advantage as dealer to make the most of good cards, and to make the least costly declaration when the chances are all against your scoring on the deal. In other words it is your business to prevent dummy from throwing away the game, and when your hand does not contain a single trick you should unhesitatingly declare spades.

There is as we have pointed out elsewhere a marked tendency in modern bridge to shoulder dummy with the responsibility of making the declaration. If the dealer does not hold a *jeu-de-règle* no-trumper or red-trump hand he usually passes the declaration. His hand may, therefore, range from considerably over average strength to utter defenselessness. It would greatly simplify the inferences to be drawn from passing the call if it were a convention that the dealer should declare a black trump:

(1) When his score is so far advanced that he has a reasonable certainty of the game in his own hand.

---

*Dummy's chances of declaring hearts or diamonds is approximately $\frac{1}{8}$.

(2) When he does not hold a single trick and his hand falls below the minimum seven points.

The first case properly comes under playing to the score and largely depends on the judgment of the player. An advanced score is a tangible advantage which should not be lightly jeopardized.

.   .   .   .

If, however, you hold one certain trick in your hand there is no necessity to assume that you must lose on the deal. Remember that there are 26 cards to be played and that the 13 cards held by your partner have to be considered. Any sound declaration that dummy might make may not turn out so disastrous as an original spade declaration doubled.

If you hold one certain trick (an ace, king, or queen), your hand will total up to 7 or more. The other three hands total up to 65 or less (72–7), so that dummy's hand will probably come up to 21. Now the minimum strength on which the exposed hand should declare no trumps is 23. This means that dummy will declare no trumps only if he holds something more than his fair share of the good cards held by the three unknown hands, and when you hold one certain trick there is no reason to assume that the odd trick must be lost.

Moreover, owing to the glaring disadvantages of a *misère* declaration, the spade shield should be very sparingly used. With one certain trick or with two suits protected, the dealer's advantage of knowing the cards in his favor and where finesses are practicable

must also be considered. There is no necessity to rush off with a confession of weakness which, while it does not afford the greatest amount of safety, entirely kills the hope of a good score. If the partner can be trusted to make a sound declaration, and unless clearly overruled by the state of the score, when the dealer's hand totals up to 7 or more, it is best to pass the make.

. . . .

But besides these *misère* spade declarations the dealer may be compelled to declare clubs or a red trump defensively with a hand that totals up to less than 7, according to the Robertson scale. As these hands present some features of difficulty, we will discuss a few typical ones:

1	Hearts............	J	10	8	5	3	2
2	Diamonds	Q	10	6	4	3	2
3	Clubs	10	9	7	6	5	3
4	Diamonds	K	9	6	5	4	3
5	Hearts............	Q	8	7	6	5	4
6	Hearts............	Q	J	10	4	2	
7	Diamonds	K	10	8	7	3	
8	Clubs	Q	10	8	6	4	
9	Diamonds	Q	10	7	6	4	
10	Hearts............	K	10	6	5	3	

Nothing else of any value in the hand and very weak spades.

These hands are all below the minimum 7, and it does not seem expedient for the dealer to pass the declaration with any of them at love all.

It is clear that if dummy makes a trump declaration

loss must result unless he holds an exceptional hand. This can be readily demonstrated.

Should he declare no trumps, on an average no-trumper the dealer's hand will prove worthless unless dummy holds at least the ace of his long suit. Even then it is not likely to be established unless dummy holds three cards of the suit. The dealer has to depend on his long suit for re-entry as he does not hold a card of re-entry in any other suit. But as the chances are two to one against dummy holding the ace, the chances are at least two to one that the adversaries will stop the suit and the dealer's long cards will never come in.

Eliminating exceptional distributions of the cards, the dealer would seriously jeopardize the game if he passed the declaration with any of these hands. The question is what should he declare protectively?

The main considerations involved are:

(1) These hands are valueless unless the long suit is declared trumps.

(2) There is a two to one chance that spades will be doubled.

(3) The dealer by naming his long suit trumps does not disclose the poverty of his hand as he would do by declaring spades originally.

When the dealer holds a six-card suit (see cases 1 to 5), it is highly probable that if the long suit is declared trumps it is good for three tricks. Owing to the dealer's advantages, with any six trumps there is a probability of his making the odd trick. His cards

are clearly worthless with any other declaration, and the loss of at least two by cards is more than probable. As the loss of two by cards in doubled spades or in any other declaration would carry the adversaries' score to a useful stage, it would be safest for the dealer to declare his long suit. But he must be careful not to risk a large honor score against him.

In cases 6 to 10, the dealer has an even chance of making or losing the odd trick. His safest course is to name his long suit, or to declare spades, as the chances are all against him if he passes the declaration. When he holds two honors in his five-card suit, he should make it trumps, as, besides the protection it affords the suit, there is a probability of his scoring at least simple honors. In all other cases he should declare spades.

To sum up: When the dealer's hand falls below the minimum 7 he should declare spades. But if he holds a six-card suit or a five-card suit to two honors, and weak spades, he should make his long suit trumps, his hand being clearly worthless in any other declaration.

The Blind Lead at No Trumps

WITH a very few exceptions, your opening lead against a no-trumps declaration should be made from your longest suit, —

Because it informs your partner where your main strength lies;

Because the struggle on each side is to establish one or more long suits, and leading yours will help to establish it early; and

Because playing on the probabilities it is the lead least likely to help the dealer, and it has a chance of hitting his weak spot and so saving the game before the dealer can get into the lead.

There is a mischievous belief among players that it is inadvisable to afford too much information by your lead. Theorists who contend that every indication given to your partner may be turned against you by the dealer appear to lose sight of the fact that single-handed it would, except in rare cases, be hopeless for you to contend against a no-trumps declaration. To make anything of a stand you must join forces with your partner, and this combination of forces is not possible unless you give him as much information as you can about the contents of your hand.

That the information may be useful to the dealer is in the majority of cases a lesser evil, as we shall presently

see, than the mischief likely to result by withholding it from your partner. The dealer knows already what cards are out against him. The additional information, regarding the lie of the cards, may enable him to know whether a finesse will be successful, but it will not alter the fact of a card lying in his favor or against him. It would only be useful were an alternative line of play open to him.

On the other hand it is vitally important that the partners should know what assistance they can afford each other, and what suit or suits have a chance of being established against the dealer. This knowledge is very often the only means of saving game against a no-trumps declaration.

The opening lead especially should be so arranged as to enable the third hand to know the strength of the combination opened. This is best shown by leading the third-best card of your long suit.

THE TWELVE RULE

As we shall see when we come to consider bridge probabilities, there are approximately two chances out of three that the leader's long suit will contain five or more cards. Ordinarily in three leads of the suit, he will be left with two long cards.

The chief disadvantage he labors under is his ignorance of the help his partner can give him. As his partner you have the advantage of seeing the exposed hand before playing, and provided the third best card has been led, in a large majority of cases

you will know exactly what chance the suit has of being established.

The first information you gain from the lead is that the leader holds exactly two cards higher than the one led. If now you deduct the pips on the card led from 12 you will know the number of cards held in each of the other three hands higher than the one led.

Any or all of them may he held by you or they may be divided between dummy's hand, yours, and the dealer's. Say he leads the 8, you deduct this number from 12 and find there are four cards out against him. Should you hold two, and dummy the others — say you hold the K 10 2, and dummy the Q 9 7 — you know at once that your partner's suit is established. If dummy does not cover with the Q you put on the 10 with confidence, and return the K.

If you were uncertain that the third best card had been led, you would be obliged to put on the K third in hand, with the result that dummy would stop the suit with his Q on the third round. Instead of making five tricks in the suit you could not possibly make over four and might make only two.

If the 9 is led there are three, if the 8 four, if the 7 five, cards that obstruct the leader's suit. Dummy's hand being exposed you know with certainty how many cards are held by each of the four hands higher than the one led. In the majority of cases you will be able to locate the entire suit.

This lead is especially effective when dummy declares no trumps. Take these cases:

I

Dummy: Q 9 8
Leader: A J 7 4 2   Pone: K 10 3
Dealer: 6 5

II

Dummy: J 9 8 7
Leader: K Q 6 3 2   Pone: A 10 4
Dealer: 5

Now compare the difference as regards pone's knowledge under the three systems — the third-best, the fourth-best and the lowest card of the suit.

Under the two latter systems, pone would know almost nothing about the leader's suit. But when you open with the third-best, he is at once able to place almost every card of the suit. He is also able to finesse over dummy with certainty.

Now compare the dealer's knowledge under each of these systems. It will readily be seen that whatever you might lead you add nothing useful to the information he already possesses. He knows exactly what cards are held against him. In the one case he knows the A K J and 10 are against him, and in the other the A K Q and 10.

Cases in which the third hand has a chance of finessing over dummy occur frequently. It is possible that pone may finesse even when the fourth-best or the lowest is played, but as the finesse would be attended with much uncertainty and may, if it fails, greatly delay the establishment of the leader's suit,

it would be rarely advisable to trifle with your partner's lead in this way.

This may be the very suit in which the dealer is totally unprotected, but unless you know for certain that he does not hold a card higher than the one led, as third in hand you have generally to play your highest even though you leave dummy with a stopper.

The beginner need not labor through the discussion that follows.

It has been persistently asserted that the third-best gives too much information, but in order to discredit the lead it is necessary to show that such information is *in the majority of cases* more useful to the dealer than it is to the partners.* Experience so far has proved that this contention is unsound, and the reason is that in order to play a combined game you must be candid with your partner even at the risk of being too frank with the enemy.

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*As regards the respective merits of the third and fourth-best leads, it is clear that if a number showing lead is to be adopted, the inferences to be drawn from the third-best are very much more useful and simpler than the inferences to be drawn from the fourth-best. The reason of this is that the gap between the third-best card of your long suit and its fourth-best card may be anything from one to nine cards.

Playing the *second*-best card of your long suit would not do, because it would in most cases be sacrificing a valuable card, and, unless it is a commanding card, it is obviously an absurd lead as it would cripple your chances of gaining command of the suit. The third-best just hits the happy medium.

It may be that in some cases the inferences to be drawn from leading the fourth-best are nearly on a par with the inferences to be drawn from leading the third-best. But to say that the fourth-best is the better lead because after much thought the fourth-best player's partner would select the same card as the third-best player's partner is a truly lame and impotent conclusion.

Your chances against a no-trump make are slender enough, without your seeking to involve the play, as between you and your partner, in deliberately achieved chaos. Say you lead the 3 from A K 9 7 5 3, dummy holds Q 8 4, third hand 10 5 2, and dealer J. The J takes the trick, and as your partner has no information whatever about your hand, how is he to know what hope there is of saving the game in your suit? The dealer knows where the A and K are, but for all your unhappy partner knows you may have led from 9 7 5 3.

Suppose you did lead from 9 7 5 3, and the pone held a five-card suit to the K Q J. He would be obliged to return your lead on the first opportunity unless he knows for certain that your suit is hopeless. You, in other words, compel him to throw away the chance of saving the game in his own suit. You are really playing the dealer's game, by deliberately withholding from each other information which the dealer already possesses, and which is of vital importance to your partnership.

But let us examine cases which are supposed to be disadvantageous to the third-best leader. It is usual for opponents of the lead to construct hands in which dummy has an opportunity of making a successful finesse over pone, and on the strength of such distributions to impugn the principle of giving information by your opening lead. They overlook the fact that in all such cases the finesse may have been made, and *in the majority of cases should have been made*, on the lead of any small card.

Here is a case from actual play:

Dummy: 10 9 2
Leader: A J 8 4 3   Pone: 7
Dealer: K Q 6 5

Leader opened with the 8, and as dealer could place the A and J, he put on the 9 from dummy.

This hand is given not merely because it occurred in actual play, but because it is about as unfavorable a hand as it is possible to construct for the leader. In the actual game, the dealer headed the trick with the 9, and opponents of the lead of course held that playing the third-best suggested the finesse.

Now, if, instead of the third-best, the fourth-best or the lowest had been led, it is clear that nothing could be lost by putting up the 9, that in fact it is the only correct play under the circumstances, because wherever the J might lie it would ensure the dealer two tricks at least in the suit. Therefore, as the dealer must have played as he did, where is the disadvantage of leading the third-best?

However A might lead, the dealer is told nothing that he does not know, but leading the third-best tells the pone, in most cases, a great deal about his partner's hand. And when he is able to place certain cards in his partner's hand, he is indirectly, according to his powers of inference and his bridge perception, informed about the contents of the dealer's hand. The balance of advantage therefore clearly lies with the third-best lead.

The point is that the dealer knows whether he need fear the suit and what its limits are. Therefore it must be right in the majority of cases to let your partner know the limits of your suit. It will be useful to him in inferring the contents of the dealer's hand, and it will help him to decide whether there is a better chance of saving the game in his own suit.

Opening with the third-best against a no-trumps declaration does away entirely with the present cumbersome and complicated system of leads, which are of no use whatever to the average player. It also greatly simplifies the inferences to be drawn from the card led.

Rule 1. — From every combination from which it would be incorrect to lead a commanding card play your third highest card.

Rule 2. — From a sequence of three or more cards headed by an honor, play the highest of the sequence.

These two rules cover all the ground, with three exceptions which are self-evident and which will not in the least burden the memory once their guiding principle is understood.

EXCEPTION I

The principle that should guide you in leading against a no-trump declaration is that you should not play a commanding card of your long suit, unless you see your way to gaining complete command of the suit, or unless you hold one or more cards of re-entry.

With a re-entry you should play a bold game and

accept the risk of your suit being stopped in the second
or third round, as you have a chance to come in with
your re-entry and make the rest of the suit.

With a Re-Entry

lead the ace from

> A Q J two others
> A Q 10 three "
> A Q five   "

lead the king from

> A K J 10
> A K J and others
> A K four   "
> K Q 10 two   "
> K Q four   "

A guarded king may be counted upon as a card of
re-entry when the dealer has made the declaration.
Against a passed make, however, absolute protection
in a suit other than your long suit is necessary.

When you do not hold a card of re-entry in another
suit, remember that your ability to regain the lead will
depend on your long suit, so that it would be unsafe to
play out commanding cards unless you have a very
good chance of gaining complete command of the suit.
By leading commanding cards you very likely take
out the only cards your partner holds in the suit, and
if the adversaries stop it, he cannot return it to you
when he gets the lead. Instead of making five or six
tricks in your long suit you make only one or two, and
your hand is then dead.

By leading your third-best and if necessary giving away the first trick you have a chance of your partner returning your suit when he gets in.

Without a Re-Entry

lead the ace from

A Q	J	10	and at least 3 others
A Q	J		" " " 4 "
A Q	10		
A Q			" " " 6 "
A K			" " " 5 "

EXCEPTION II

When your opening lead is made from a hopelessly weak suit such as four cards headed by a 10 it is always well to warn your partner of the weakness by playing your lowest card — usually a 2 or a 3. From the exposed hand and the fall of the cards in the first round he will see that it is not your third best and infer your weakness. This should tell him also not to expect much from you during the deal as your best suit only contains three cards. It should not of course be taken to mean that your hand is necessarily worthless in the other suits.

EXCEPTION III

When you hold an A K suit, *other than your long suit,* you should play the K in order to see dummy's cards before you continue.* The importance of this is obvious.

The blind lead is a great help to the dealer, and you

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*This like all other rules of play must be used intelligently.

should, whenever you can do so with safety, neutralize this advantage by playing a card which will retain the lead till you have seen dummy's hand. You will then, in the majority of cases, know whether the game is in danger, in what directions strength or weakness lies, how best to play your long suit, etc.

It will also enable your partner to know how to put you into the lead should you be left with any winning cards in your long suit later on in the game. The information is not nearly so useful to the dealer, who knows exactly what cards are out against him as soon as dummy's hand comes down.

Remember that by playing the K you do not relinquish command of the suit; that the information conveyed by your lead is a great deal more useful to your partner than it is to the dealer; and that as saving the game should be the first thought of the non-dealers in playing against a no-trumps declaration, this lead, by enabling you to see dummy's cards before you part with the lead, will in most cases enable you to know how, if possible, to save the game.

If, however, your A K suit is also your long suit, it is not advisable, as we have already seen, to play out the A or K unless you see your way to gaining complete command of the suit, or you hold one or more cards of re-entry in the other suits.

Instead of the usual table of leads, with and without cards of re-entry, and a confusing list of exceptions, it would be useful to study the inferences to be drawn from the leads.

Inferences From the Leads

Ace led should be regarded as an urgent invitation to unblock. It should always mean that the leader has at least six cards in suit. Being a commanding card it means that the leader either hopes to gain complete command of the suit, or he holds one or more cards of re-entry. The exposed hand will guide the partner in unblocking.

King led should be looked upon as a somewhat less urgent invitation to unblock. It may be a commanding card from A K and four or more, or from K Q and at least three others. The leader either hopes to clear his suit, or he has one or more cards of re-entry. The exposed hand will make this clear.

Queen led shows sequence of Q J 10 and one or more as it is only led from that one combination.

Jack led might mean a sequence of J 10 9 and one or more, or it might be a third best lead from

> A K J and one or more
> A Q J "   "   "   "

From the 27 cards in view, the third hand will easily detect the combination from which it is played.

The 10 might be led from any of the following combinations:

> A K 10 and one or more
> A Q 10 "   "   "   "
> A J 10 "   "   "   "
> K Q 10 "   "   "   "
> K J 10 "   "   "   "
>   10 9 8 "   "   "   "

In the first five cases it would be a third-best lead
and indicate that only two cards are out against the
leader. From the 27 cards in view the third hand will
readily detect the weakness in the last case.

It will be noticed that with the exception of the A
K and Q the other bridge honors are mostly third-
best leads. When as an opening lead a card lower
than a ten is played it should as a rule be the third
highest card of the suit.

Leading the third-best enables the partner:

(1) To know almost exactly what chance there is to
establish the suit;

(2) To finesse whenever necessary against dummy;

(3) To know when the suit is hopeless and should
be changed for his own long suit;

(4) To unblock with certainty; and

(5) It greatly simplifies the leads, as well as the
inferences to be drawn from the leads.

It is mainly on account of the information they con-
vey that conventions are so important in bridge, and
it is in the multiplication of conventions, such as the
third-best lead, that the dealer's advantages will be
considerably diminished. To assert vaguely that it is
inexpedient to play the number showing leads at
bridge does not dispose of the question. The point is
whether the 'information game' is more useful to the
dealer than it is to the non-dealers — having in view
the fact that *the dealer knows already what cards are
held against him.*

There are very few rules in bridge that are inflexible,

and cases will occasionally arise which will compel you to lead from a suit that is not your longest.

First Case

H.	10 7 2	J 6 4
D.	9 6 4	K Q J
C.	A K Q	5 4 3 2
S.	6 5 3 2	10 7 3

Second Case

H.	J 2	Q 6	J 10 9
D.	9 6 5	A Q 2	K 6 2
C.	9 4 3 2	8 6 4 3	8 6 4 2
S.	7 5 4 3	7 6 5 4	K J 3

In the hands in the first case it would be beetle-headed to open with your four-card suits or to expect to do any good in them. It sounds well enough to say that even four small cards possess an element of strength and that after three rounds you will be left with a winner. But this assumes that the other cards of the suit are equally divided, whereas the odds against such a distribution are 158,735 to 16,795, or nine to one. The more usual distributions (see the chapter on the mathematics of bridge) are 4 3 2, 5 3 1, and 5 2 2, and when they are so divided the chances are two to one that your partner will be short in the suit, and you are playing the dealer's game by inviting your partner to give up the good card or cards he may hold in the suit. On the other hand you lose nothing by leading from such

strong combinations as A K Q or K Q J, and even with less strength, say A K 4 or K Q 10, you should, I think, *lead* the K instead of opening with such a hopeless suit as four cards to an eight.

The hands in the second case call for more careful handling. Any lead is likely to prove disastrous, but as you must open the game, you should select a card that will do your partner the least damage. Your partner's hand has to be considered, because it is his cards alone that can save the game. Leading hearts would perhaps do his hand the least harm, and as you have no good lead, a strengthening heart may prove the most effective defense against a no-trumps declaration by dummy.

The Blind Lead With a Declared Trump

THERE is much difference of opinion regarding the original or blind lead against an *offensive* trump make. The declaration may be made at love or at any point of the score. The initial lead is important, as the fate of the game, and it may well be the fate of the rubber, depends on the card you open against a sound *offensive* trump make. Without a laborious sifting of the respective merits of long-suiters and short-suiters, we may point out that the long-suit leaders at whist played with the object of bringing in their long cards after the trumps were extracted. But when an *offensive* trump declaration is made at bridge, the strength in trumps is declared against you, and the long cards of your best suit are not likely to be of much value to you.

On the other hand, the dealer's long suits have to be feared and you should not be in a hurry to play out aces and so help to establish his long suits.

Your object in leading is not so much to bring in any suit as *to make all your possible tricks* — your aces, kings and queens — and not to establish any suit against you on the little cards of which you may have to discard any possible trick-winners.

As soon as dummy's hand comes down, you are generally in a position to know whether or not the

game is in danger. Your original lead should therefore comprise the double object of retaining the lead till you have seen the exposed hand, and be at the same time one that is not likely to sacrifice a possible trick in your partner's or in your own hand. With these objects in view the following *defensive leads* are arranged in their order of merit, beginning with the useful and the expedient and tailing off into the objectionable. *In each case the card underlined is the one* that should be led.

DEFENSIVE LEADS

1. *A K with or without others*

This is an excellent suit to open as it will enable you to see the exposed hand without parting with the lead. It also gives your partner a chance of calling should he be able to ruff on the third round.

If you play the ace and follow with the king it should mean that you hold no more of the suit and invite a ruff.

This suit should be opened even when your partner doubles a declaration by dummy, because you can have a look at the exposed hand without parting with the lead. Of course after winning with the king you should continue with your best trump unless you see clearly that it would be more profitable to adopt another course. By playing the king you let your partner know how to put you into the lead again should it be necessary to play another round of trumps through

the declarer. In any case the information is likely
to be most useful to him.

2. *K Q Doubleton*

This is the only unobjectionable doubleton. If the
ace is not put on you continue with the queen. Should
the ace be against you, you lose little by this lead
which gives you a chance of a ruff on the third round
and may help to establish your partner's jack. The
object of leading from this doubleton is to prevent
your partner from playing the ace and so sacrificing
a probable trick. Most other doubletons are very
bad opening leads.

3. *K Q J with or without others*

Nothing is lost by leading from such a strong com-
bination. It may also give you a chance of seeing
dummy's cards without parting with the lead.

4. *Q J 10 with or without others*
or Q J and two others

While risking little by leading from these combina-
tions there is a chance of dummy's king falling to
your partner's ace.

5. *Ace Singleton*

The chief merit of this lead consists in its enabling
you to see the exposed hand without parting with

the lead. It also gives you a chance of a ruff on the second round, and stands a better chance than any other singleton of enabling you to make a little trump. It has not the disadvantage of other singletons which as often as not cause your partner to sacrifice a probable trick.

6. *Ace and four others*

The two advantages of leading an ace are: it retains the lead till you have seen the exposed hand and it secures one trick. Its disadvantages are: that it makes the king good wherever it may lie and may help to establish several tricks against you. But when you hold five cards of the suit, it is not likely you will need the ace to stop the adversaries' suit.

7. *Singleton*

This is a favorite lead with many players who fancy they see an easy way to making their little trumps. It fails though quite as often as it succeeds and is on the border-line between a desirable and a non-desirable opening lead. As often as not you make your partner sacrifice a probable trick, and unless he holds great strength in the suit, this lead usually goes a good way to establish the suit for the dealer. To succeed, your partner must take the trick (which is equivalent to depending on his holding the ace) and he must know it is your singleton. The chances are two to one that he does not hold the ace, in which case the dealer is likely to disarm you by extracting your trumps.

This lead calls for careful examination because the books strongly recommend it, and there are players who will play a singleton in preference to any other lead, without stopping to consider the state of the score, the number of trumps they hold or the rest of the cards in hand.

A singleton is without any question a most useful lead at bridge, but unless it is played intelligently it will in the long run lose more than it will win.   When the dealer declares diamonds and you hold

the singleton heart is unquestionably the correct lead. But in a majority of cases the singleton will fail unless you are able to stop the trump suit at least once, and you are able to put your partner into the lead to return the suit to you.

Players are very apt to be impressed by the success

of a singleton; they are not equally impressed by its failure which they accept as inevitable. There is a two to one chance against success, and when played blindly the risk of establishing the suit for the dealer outweighs the problematic gain of utilizing a little trump. If you are weak in trumps the dealer is very apt to take the lead and draw them, and if you are moderately strong in trumps, say you hold four to the jack, it is very poor policy indeed to play for a ruff, which will considerably weaken the defensive strength of your hand. Remember that a singleton, or a doubleton, for that matter, does not lose all chance of success by being retained until dummy's hand is seen.

8. *K Q and one or more*

The chief objection to this lead is that if the ace is held adversely you make only one of your two good cards, whereas you have a chance of making both if the ace lies to your right. But as the chances are five to four that your partner will hold either ace or jack, this is a better suit to open than a *singleton* with two or three little trumps that are liable to be extracted by the dealer.

9. *Ace and three others*

Any short suit in which you hold the ace unaccompanied by the king should be avoided, but if you have none of the combinations given above you should lead the ace from ace and three others.

10. *Ace and two others*

This is the only case in which you may open an ace suit without leading the ace. An ace is of great value as a stopping card and when you are short in the suit yourself if you lead it there is a danger of establishing the suit for the dealer and so · playing his game. It sounds well enough in theory to say that if you open a suit headed by an ace you should always lead the ace, but in practice the danger of losing the ace is a lesser evil than the risk you run by giving up command of the suit. You should avoid if possible leading from this suit, but if you must open it lead the lowest.

11. *Ace and one more*
or Q J

Of these two doubletons the less objectionable is the ace and one more, because after seeing the exposed hand you may or may not continue with the suit. The queen jack doubleton is sometimes useful in killing a king in dummy's hand, but there are always two chances to one that the king is not with dummy. All other doubletons are pernicious and should be resorted to only when there is absolutely nothing else to lead. In such an exceptional case for instance as the following:

Dealer declares hearts and you hold
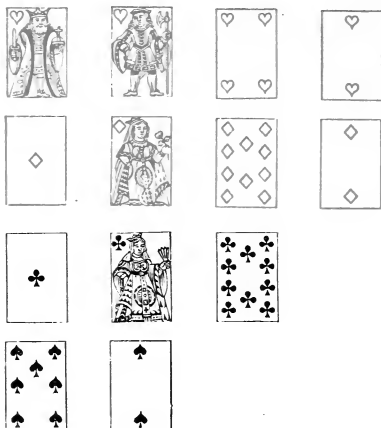
the doubleton is of course excusable but then with such a hand the game is safe.

12. *In all other cases lead the fourth best card of your strongest suit.*

This lead should be adopted only as the last resort in the defence against a strong trump declaration; it requires no amplification.

The entire group of defensive leads has been graded according to their order of merit, and may be advantageously stated in tabular form:

TABLE OF DEFENSIVE LEADS

(*i*)   A K̲ with or without others.
(*ii*) K̲ Q, doubleton.
(*iii*) K̲ Q J.

 (*iv*) Q J 10
      or Q J and two others.
  (*v*) A, Singleton.
 (*vi*) A and four others.
(*vii*) Singleton.
(*viii*) K Q and others.
 (*ix*) A and three others.
  (*x*) A and two others.
 (*xi*) A and one other
      or Q J doubleton.
(*xii*) Fourth best card of your strongest suit.

When dummy's cards are exposed you will have a fair idea of the directions in which strength or weakness lies and can order your play accordingly. But the opening lead which has to be made in the dark should, if possible, be one of the first six given above which are mainly defensive. Remember, the fate of the game, and it may well be the fate of the rubber, depends on the card you open against a sound offensive trump declaration.

All the leads from No. 7 are of doubtful expediency and should not be adopted when any of the preceding combinations are available to lead from. The chief object aimed at in playing against an offensive trump declaration is to save the game. Special points of the score have to be specially considered, but at love all, when a *red* trump is declared against you, you should aim at securing four tricks if the declaration is "Hearts," or three tricks if it is "Diamonds." As your original lead will be a blind one

it should as far as possible be *a card that will not cause you or your partner to sacrifice any possible trick.* As soon as dummy's hand comes down, you are better able to see your way, so that it will usually pay you to play a card that will retain the lead till you have seen the contents of his hand.

These general principles must be intelligently applied and the inferences to be gathered from the declaration must not be overlooked. If the declaration has been made by dummy it may be advisable to lead a doubleton red suit up to the dealer rather than give up a major tenace in a black suit by leading out the ace. In the same way, when the dealer declares diamonds or leaves it to dummy a singleton heart is a better suit to open than a four-card black suit headed by an ace, etc.

Some objectionable opening leads are:

1. *A three-card suit headed by a king or a queen*

By leading away from such a suit the king or queen is very liable to be sacrificed.

2. *A strengthening card from a weak suit*

The chances are two to one that you establish the suit for the dealer by making your partner play out his winning card. If he does not hold the ace he is likely to sacrifice his king or queen in attempting to take the trick. This lead may also mislead your partner as it is liable to be mistaken for a doubleton.

3. *A doubleton with two little trumps*

A doubleton is very seldom successful if you are unable to stop the trump lead. Its two chief objections are (*a*) it may make your partner sacrifice a card that might otherwise have made a trick, (*b*) it establishes the suit for the dealer by taking out your partner's "stoppers" in the suit. These objections also apply to a singleton, but whereas a singleton has some chance of success a doubleton has little or none. You invite your partner either to give up command of the suit or to sacrifice a probable trick for the sake of a problematic ruff on the third round. By that time it is more than probable the dealer will have extracted your trumps. On the other hand, when you are moderately strong in trumps it is very weak play to bid for a ruff.

In all these cases it would pay best to conceal the weakness from the dealer. A singleton or a doubleton does not lose all chance of success by being retained till dummy's cards are seen. The dealer, unless he suspects the weakness, may not be in a hurry to draw your trumps. Also, in the case of a strengthening card from a weak suit, you should wait till you have seen dummy's hand and can play forcing and supporting cards intelligently. Leading the jack from a weak suit would be of little use if you find dummy with two or three cards to the ten. But the main objection to these leads is that if you establish a suit for the dealer early in the hand it will help him to get rid of his losing cards in the other suits and your aces and kings may never come in.

Leading trumps when neither you nor your partner has doubled is always risky. If however all your suits are fully protected and you are unable to lead from them owing to your holding tenaces, you may open with trumps, especially if you are leading through the declarer, but the risk should be incurred only when it is clear that the extraction of trumps will not help the dealer. The object of leading trumps is to prevent the adverse weak trump hand ruffing any of your likely tricks. When the hand contains an ace king suit, the king should be led before starting the trumps, both for the information it will give your partner and because it will enable you to see the exposed hand.

The Discard Dilemma

AGAINST a declared trump you have to play more or less independently of your partner. You have to make your winning cards before the dealer has a chance of getting rid of his losing ones, and your partner has to do the same. The conditions are different when you have to play against a no-trumper. To make anything of a stand you must combine your forces against the dealer, and in order to play a combined game you need to tell your partner points about your hand that may be turned to account. You must in other words inform your partner of the contents of your hand by your leads, your play and your discards.

Theorists have on this account assumed that the primary object of the discard is to give information. But the important thing in discarding is not so much to give information as to defend your hand against the dealer by keeping guards to minor honors — to tell the dealer nothing about suits in which he is trying to force discards — or in which dummy has a chance of a successful finesse. Your discards must in fact be *primarily* **Defensive.**

But when consistently with this primary object of defense you are able to convey information that will further your joint interests by all means give it.

A discard that is *defensive* and at the same time *directive* is therefore the correct discard in the majority of cases. It is not possible to lay down a rule that will fit every case, but so long as the game is in doubt, you must limit your discards to protecting your possible tricks, that is, it should be above everything **Defensive,** and when there is no well defined reason to the contrary, it should also be **Directive.** The latter condition depends on whether the information is likely to be more useful to the dealer than to your partner.

By all means afford no indication of the contents of your hand if the previous play or the cards in the exposed hand show a good reason for withholding information. But in most cases by playing dark you are really playing the dealer's game. His main advantage lies in the fact that his opponents are ignorant of the help they can give each other in any of the suits, whereas he knows exactly the joint strength of the two hands he commands and what suits he has a chance of establishing.

On the other hand it is most important that the partners should know what assistance they can afford each other and what suit or suits have a chance of being established against the dealer. This knowledge is very often the only means of saving game against a no-trump declaration.

Information conveyed by your play not only informs your partner of the cards you hold, but enables him to infer the contents of the dealer's hand. It is

thus doubly useful to him and tends to place him on a footing with the dealer. If we suppose the information carried so far that all four hands become known, the dealer would at once lose all his advantages as dealer.

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Theorists are agreed that you should discard from your best suit to the dealer's lead. But as regards discarding to the partner's lead there are two distinct systems adopted by the best players,

> (*i*) The Weak-suit or *aggressive* discard
> (*ii*) The Strong-suit or *defensive* discard.

The *weak-suit* discard has many able exponents but a little examination will show that although it is not wanting in ingenuity, it is not based on sound principles, and will lose more in the long run than it will win.

THE WEAK-SUIT OR AGGRESSIVE DISCARD

Exponents of this discard maintain that on your *partner's lead* you should make your *first* discard from your *weakest* suit — your next discard from your next weakest suit — reserving your *strong suit* for the third discard if you need to make it. If at your third discard you play a suit from which you have already made a discard without calling, your partner should infer that you do not hold a card in your best suit that you can afford to throw away.

It is very useful to guide your partner to the suit you want him to play. Suppose for instance on his winning clubs you first discard a diamond and then a spade. He should conclude that diamonds is your worst suit, that you have indifferent spades and that your best suit is hearts.

If your two discards are made from the same suit, say diamonds, without calling, the inference is that you cannot afford to throw away a club or a heart either of which may be your strong suit in any case your worst suit is diamonds.

It often happens that your partner is only able to give you one discard, as for instance when he is playing a thirteenth card. This is one of the many weak points of the weak-suit discard because it is then difficult to guide your partner to your suit unless it is a solid one and you can afford to indicate it by throwing away the best card of the suit.* If you attempt in any other way to indicate your strength you are very apt to mislead him. It is safest to discard the suit you do not want him to lead — your weakest. The cards in the exposed hand and the previous play may enable him to hit your suit.†

When your partner is playing out winning cards there can be no question that it is your duty to guide

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*It is contended that as your partner has shown one suit and the dealer another there is only one suit to hear from. This is plausible but it will not fit all cases. The dealer may be playing a thirteenth after three winners, etc.

†When you hold complete command of a suit you may indicate it by discarding the best card of the suit, but this is really a *strong-suit* discard.

him to the suit you want him to lead to you by making your discards as directive as possible. But the danger is that when he does play your suit you will not in most cases hold sufficient winners to save the game. In the majority of cases you will have to let the dealer into the lead and then your *weak-suit* discards will tell against you. Because in directing your partner to your suit you have very likely been compelled to unguard minor honors that may have made tricks, and which would have prevented the establishment of the dealer's suits.

The idea of the *weak-suit* discard is that as you are in the lead *you are for the time being the aggressors*, but if your attack fails, as we have shown it must in the majority of cases when the declaration is a sound one, you have gratuitously shown the dealer which hand to lead up to and finesse against with safety. That tell-tale little discard from your doubleton or three-card suit will be most useful to the dealer in locating the position of your partner's king or queen, or it may show him that the honor your partner holds is unguarded and that he can safely draw all the cards of his long suit and so establish it off hand.

This discard is therefore unsound if for no other reason than that it necessitates your unguarding even weakly protected jacks and tens.

THE STRONG-SUIT OR DEFENSIVE DISCARD

Your only hope lies in playing on the defensive against such an attacking declaration as no trumps,

and when you are on the defensive it is foolish to point out where you are most vulnerable, or to hope that you will be able to bring in all the cards of your long suit.

Both on your partner's and on the dealer's lead, **make your FIRST** discard from your **BEST SUIT** *that is, one in which a lead from your partner is desirable.* All subsequent discards may then be made with absolute freedom and as the situation may warrant.

Besides the positive information afforded to your partner by this discard, in the first place the card you can best afford to throw away is one from your best suit, as it is not likely you can bring in all the cards you hold of the suit when no trumps has been declared against you. In the next place as you must limit your discards to protecting your possible tricks you should discard from a suit in which you may part with a small card with safety.*

As regards its informative nature, a weak suit discard would convey more useful information to the

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*It is contended by those who employ the aggressive discard that even a single card of your best suit is too valuable to be wasted. This assumes that you have not only a chance of bringing in your suit. but of bringing it all in.

In discarding to your partner's lead it has been assumed that he is playing out winners. and if in addition to his winning cards you hold a suit of which you expect to make every card. either dummy's hand must be very poor or the make must be unsound.

It is not wise to expect all these happy circumstances to occur *in the majority of cases*.

dealer who knows the cards out against him.* By helping him to locate the position of any honor your partner may hold in your weak suit you are really playing his game.

On the other hand your partner wishes to know where your *strength* lies, as otherwise it would not be possible for you to play a concerted game.

A discard which directly and unequivocally indicates your best suit while protecting your weak ones cannot but hold the field against a discard which, however ingenious in its application, cripples your weak suits and deliberately exposes your weakness to the dealer, besides requiring two leads from your partner to make its meaning plain.

When you cannot discard from your best suit without unguarding it your hand must be a poor one, and so long as you do not mislead your partner or give him away by a tell-tale discard from a seemingly worthless suit, it is of little account what you play. You may then fall back on the reverse discard.

THE REVERSE DISCARD

The *reverse* discard is a very old whist convention. It consists in playing, contrary to the ordinary rules of play, an unnecessarily high card followed by a low

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*The opening lead has shown the dealer where one long suit lies, and as he knows what cards are out against him he is usually able to infer the position of any other suit he may have reason to fear. In the majority of cases, therefore, the information afforded by your discard, when it is made from strength, tells him nothing that he does not already know.

one, and was used in the older game as a command
to the partner to lead trumps at the first opportunity.

If you use the strong-suit discard and you find that
you are unable or unwilling to discard from your strong
suit, either because you are afraid to unguard it or
because you do not wish to throw away a certain win-
ning card, you may employ the *reverse* discard.

A very little bridge perception will enable your
partner to know how matters stand. He will in any
case know that the suit in which you make the reverse
discard is the one you do not on any account wish
him to lead.

Before you begin a reverse discard it is well to be
sure that you will have two discards to make, or your
partner if he is a rule of thumb player may mistake
it for your strong suit. But this is hardly likely with
a good partner, because he has the exposed hand as
well as the previous play to guide him.

The points in favor of the strong-suit discard need
no enlargement:

It is *safe* because it does not unguard your weak
suits or give your partner away in order to show your
best suit.

It is *simple* both for the player who makes the dis-
card and for the partner who has to watch it.

It is *directive* and takes the place of the call.

It is *uniform* whether the dealer or your partner
is in the lead — and is the same discard used against
an offensive trump declaration.

It is *expedient* as it allows you greater freedom in

making subsequent discards without compelling you to unguard two suits to indicate your best suit.

This information is a great deal more valuable to your partner who is groping in the dark for your strong suit than it is to the dealer who knows already what high cards are held against him. From the opening lead he knows the position of one long suit, so that your discard from strength is not likely to tell him anything he does not already know. The balance of advantage clearly lies on the side of the strong-suit discard.

WITH A DECLARED TRUMP

With a declared trump the discard is comparatively simple.

If it is an *offensive* declaration, the strength in trumps is against you and you cannot hope to extract them and bring in the small cards of your long suit. You can well afford to part with these small cards, and when you are playing a *defensive* game you should *discard from your best suit.* Your *first* discard especially should inform your partner that a lead in that suit is desirable. It is either your best suit or you hold a singleton or a doubleton and see your way to getting in a ruff. From the exposed hand and the fall of the cards, your partner will have no difficulty in detecting your strength or weakness. When you discard from a doubleton, you should of course *call while discarding*.

The principle of the discard against an *offensive* trump declaration is to keep up guards to your weak

suits and to inform your partner of your good suit or suits by parting with small cards that you can well afford to throw away. It is of no use to discard from such a suit as three cards to a jack, as you can only hope to get in a ruff on the third round and you may be unguarding the suit for the dealer. The great drawback to discarding from a weak suit is that it may give your partner away by helping the dealer to locate the position of his king or queen.

When the adversaries have made a defensive spade declaration, there is some hope of your bringing in your long suit and there is not much use in keeping up guards to your weak ones. The fall of the cards in the first few rounds will show you whether you should play an *offensive* or *defensive* game.

When your partner has doubled the trump suit, there is a chance of your bringing in your long suit, so that you may discard from your weak suits.

If you are the doubler, you should have a tolerably clear idea of what to discard after seeing dummy's hand.

The Mathematics of Bridge

THE scientific principles of any game into which a large element of chance enters are based on the laws of probability. It may not be necessary to know that there are 635, 013, 559, 660 possible hands that may be held at bridge or the correct odds against the occurrence of a Yarborough. But one can never hope to attain to any degree of excellence if one is ignorant of the normal chances that affect the plan of the game.

If you ask a dozen advanced players "What is the average value of a deal?" or "How many deals on the average are there in a rubber?" the replies will be rather an indication of temperament than an insight into the scientific principles really involved in the game. The over-sanguine over-estimate the value of a deal as much as the pessimistic underrate it. Even the expert has a very hazy idea of the relative worth of points scored above and below the line in each deal. And yet this consideration has an important bearing on the declaration, seeing that the honor-value of a hand *plus* its trick-value is equal to its declaring value.

THE DECLARATIONS

In a thousand deals, with the score love all, the declarations made strictly in accordance with the present accepted theory of the game were as follows:

No Trumps	435
Hearts....................	190
Diamonds	150
Clubs	20
Spades ·	205
	———
	1,000

Approximately 45 per cent of the games are or should be played without trumps, and the most frequent make after no trumps is spades, *i. e.,* over 20 per cent. Leaving about 30 per cent for the three trump declarations, hearts, diamonds, and clubs.

Out of these 1,000 deals, the number of passed declarations amounted to 515, spades 200, clubs 20, diamonds 95, hearts 80, and no trumps 120. This large number of passed declarations points to the fact that there is, as we have so often insisted, too great a tendency in modern bridge to shoulder dummy with the onus of naming the trump. The dealing side should, as far as possible, play an aggressive game. In passing the declaration the dealer virtually relinquishes the attack — the chances being all against dummy making an offensive or paying declaration. These figures also show that the dealer's chances of making an attacking declaration are over 50 per cent.

We have known forward players to carry this percentage up to 60, while backward players and most

beginners keep it so low as 30. A forward game is certainly more germane to the attacking spirit of the deal.

The honor-value of a hand plus its trick-value is equal to its declaring value. With three honors in your hand the chances are about five to four in favor of your scoring double honors. Similarly with two aces the chances are five to four in favor of your scoring 30 aces in no trumps — nearly a third of the rubber-bonus 100. When tempted to declare no trumps without an ace, there is the probability nearly three out of four, of an honor score of 30 against you, and you run the risk, small at that, of one of the adversaries holding all four aces. This is approximately one chance out of sixty, but as it has a particularly demoralizing effect on timid players, it would be well to examine dummy's chances of holding one or more aces when the dealer holds none himself.

The chances are about

> 3 to 1 on his holding at least one ace
> 2 to 3 against his holding two aces
> 10 to 1   "   "   "   three aces
> 110 to 1   "   "   "   all four aces.

The question of honors often decides the declaration. It is seldom sound to give up a good score above the line for the sake of a small score below it, and conversely you may risk a small trick-score for the sake of a large honor-score.

Take this case: Score love all, the declaration is left to you and you hold
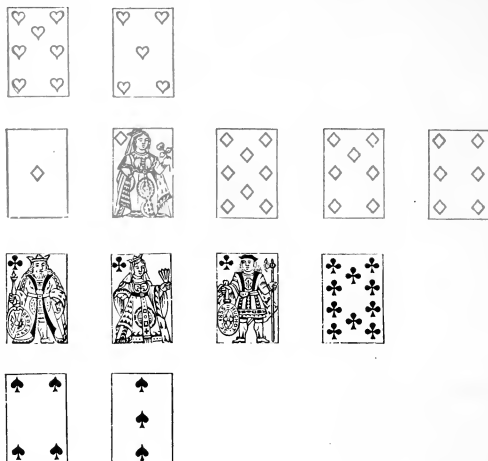
Most players would declare diamonds whereas it would be more profitable in the majority of cases to declare clubs.

The ever-varying conditions of the score make it impossible, as we have said before, to estimate the relative-value of points scored above and below the line in each deal with any approach to exactness, but *in average positions* the relative value of points scored for tricks and for honors are as three is to one.

When you hold no honors the chances are

14 to 5 in favor of the adversaries holding four honors
8 to 1 in favor of the adversaries holding simple honors

In such a case as this:
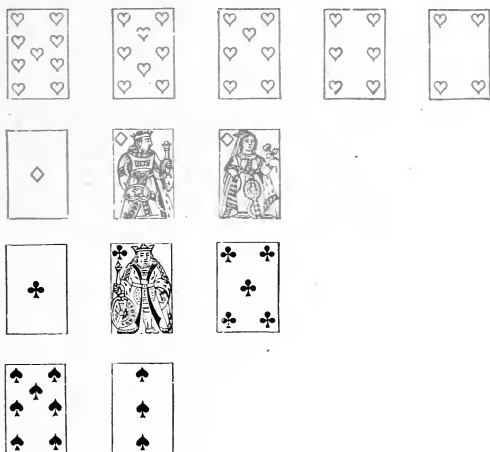
With hearts trumps you will probably make 3 by cards, but the chances are three to one that the opponents will score at least double honors against you.

If you play this hand *without trumps* you may expect to make 2 by cards and you will have a five to four chance of scoring 30 aces. In either case you have the same trick score with a fair chance of game, but there is no doubt that for the sake of the honor score you should make it no trumps.

Now substitute the K J 10 of hearts for the 9 8 7:
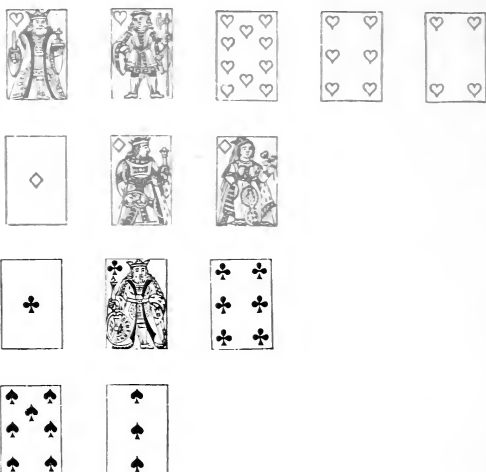
There is now a better chance for game with hearts trumps with an honor score of 16 certain and a likely 32.

Cases often occur where dummy has a choice between a doubtful red trump declaration and spades. Say he holds:
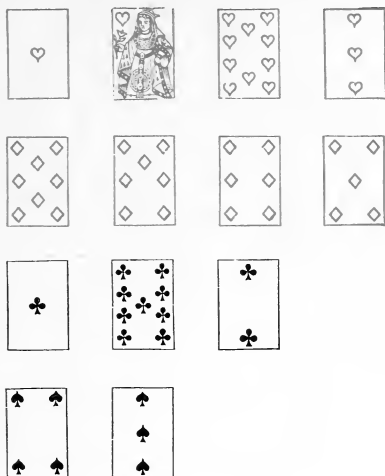
Here the chances are five to four in favor of an honor score of 32 in hearts to offset the *possible* loss of the odd trick.

This is a hand on which spades is usually declared on a pass on the lose-as-little-as-you-must principle. The principle is right enough, but is its application to such cases sound? Owing to the dealer's advantages in combining and commanding two hands, he has at least an even chance of making the odd trick with hearts trumps, whereas the loss of two by cards in doubled spades, without any compensating honor score, is very probable.

The average value of a deal is at a liberal estimate 35, and if your honor score plus your probable trick score is likely to amount to 35 it is seldom sound to

leave it to dummy in the hope of his making a more paying declaration. With five or six diamonds to three honors or five or more clubs to four honors and nothing else in the other suits, it is generally poor policy to pass the make. Dummy is in a less favorable position for making an expensive declaration, because any little weakness will be exposed as soon as the initial lead is made.

The deal is an important advantage but there is danger in exaggerating its value. There are, for instance, very many players who do not like to declare diamonds originally unless they hold four honors or seven trumps, because this declaration offers a poor chance of scoring game on the deal. This conservatism would be sound if the rubber were usually decided in three or four or even five deals. But *the average number of deals in a rubber is seven and a fraction,* so that any declaration that will carry your trick score to a *useful stage* with a reasonable chance of your scores below and above the line approximating to 40 is *per se* sound. By being in too great a hurry to score game you may give up the chance of a steady advance, besides risking a double in spades which will help the adversaries to arrive at a "useful" stage *with the deal to go on with.*

We believe it was Hoyle who first calculated the probability of a given player holding any given number of cards of a particular suit (let us say hearts) named before the deal is concluded:

o will be held by him about once in   8o deals.

1	"	"	"	8o times in	1,000 "
2	"	"	"	206 " "	1,000 "
3	"	"	"	287 " "	1,000 "
4	"	"	"	239 " "	1,000 "
5	"	"	"	125 " "	1,000 "
6	"	"	" once in		24 "
7	"	"	" " "		114 "
8	"	"	" " "		86o "
9	"	"	" " "		12,000 "
10	"	"	" " "		243,000 "
11	"	"	" " "		11,000,000 "
12	"	"	" " "		1,250,000,000 "
13	"	"	" " "		635,000,000,000 "

When you take up the cards to deal, the probability of your holding six hearts is one out of twenty-four and you have one chance in eight of holding exactly five. Dummy, of course, has an equal probability of holding five or six hearts.

As the probability of the occurrence of two or more *concurrent events* is equal to the sum of their separate probabilities, the probability of the dealer *or* dummy holding *exactly* five hearts is $\frac{1}{8}+\frac{1}{8}=\frac{1}{4}$.

Many interesting questions of declaring to the score *on the probabilities* are connected with this table of chances. To take one of many — the dealer is 24 up, what are his chances of holding

5 or more Hearts   6 or more Clubs
5 " " Diamonds   7 " " Spades

and the *concurrent* chances of dummy holding a hand likely to present a reasonable chance of scoring game in any of these declarations?

To begin with hearts, we have seen that the dealer's chance of holding exactly five hearts $= \frac{1}{8}$. His chances of holding five *or more* hearts would therefore be —

5 Hearts, one chance out of					8
6	"	"	"	"	24
7	"	"	"	"	114
8	"	"	"	"	860
9	"	"	"	"	12,100
10	"	"	"	"	243,000
11	"	"	"	"	11,000,000
12	"	"	"	"	1,250,000,000
13	"	"	"	"	635,000,000,000

The sum of these fractions would amount approximately to $\frac{7}{40}$. $\frac{7}{40} \times 2$ would therefore represent the dealer's *plus* dummy's chances of holding five *or more* hearts.

As the odd trick in diamonds would be equally useful so far as scoring game on the deal is concerned, the chances of the dealer or dummy holding five or more hearts *or* similar strength in diamonds (which is a *concurrent* chance) is represented by the fraction $\frac{7}{40} \times 2 \times 2 = \frac{7}{10}$.

Calculated in the same way, the chances of either hand holding six or more clubs *or* seven or more spades is approximately equal to $\frac{1}{10}$.

If we take the sum of these *concurrent probabilities* we find that the chances are four out of five that the

dealer *or* dummy will hold sufficient strength in one of the four suits to offer a reasonable chance of game, without incurring any risk with a missing suit no-trumper.

It is often very important, especially in the case of an original lead against a no-trumps declaration, to know the probable distribution of the cards into the different suits. Here again we are indebted to old whist masters for a table showing the chances of holding any sort of hand, arranged in the order of their respective frequencies:

Hand.	Chances.	Hand.	Chances.
4 4 3 2	34,213,221,000	8 2 2 1	305,374,212
5 3 3 2	24,633,519,768	8 3 1 1	186,617,574
5 4 3 1	20,527,933,140	8 3 2 0	172,262,376
5 4 2 2	16,795,581,660	7 5 1 0	172,262,376
4 3 3 3	16,726,464,040	6 6 1 0	114,841,584
6 3 2 2	8,957,643,552	8 4 1 0	71,775,990
6 4 2 1	7,464,702,960	9 2 1 1	28,275,390
6 3 3 1	5,474,115,504	9 3 1 0	15,950,220
5 5 2 1	5,038,674,498	9 2 2 0	13,050,180
4 4 4 1	4,751,836,375	7 6 0 0	8,833,968
7 3 2 1	2,985,881,184	8 5 0 0	4,969,107
6 4 3 0	2,105,429,040	10 2 1 0	1,740,024
5 4 4 0	1,973,839,725	9 4 0 0	1,533,675
5 5 3 0	1,421,164,602	10 1 1 1	628,342
6 5 1 1	1,119,705,444	10 3 0 0	245,388
6 5 2 0	1,033,574,256	11 1 1 0	39,546
7 2 2 2	814,331,232	11 2 0 0	18,252
7 4 1 1	622,058,580	12 1 0 0	507
7 4 2 0	574,207,920	13 0 0 0	1
7 3 3 0	421,085,808		

The total number of chances is 158,753,389,900, which is one-fourth of the whole number of ways in which a hand can be made. If we add up the chances of holding a five or more card suit, we shall find that its proportion to the total number of chances is nearly two out of three. In the case of an original lead against a no-trumps declaration the leader has, therefore, two chances out of three of leading from a five or more card suit. This might startle some Bridgites, but they must bow to figures.

This is a very useful table indeed, and in a simplified form, with the total number of chances reduced to 100, might be utilized in a variety of ways:

Hand.	Number of chances out of 100.	Hand.	Number of chances out of 100.
4 4 3 2	21	6 4 2 1	5
4 3 3 3	11	6 4 3 0	1
4 4 4 1	3	6 5 1 1	1
	— 35	6 5 2 0	1
		6 6 1 0	0
5 3 3 2	15		— 17
5 4 3 1	13		
5 4 2 2	11	7 3 2 1	2
5 5 2 1	3	7 2 2 2	1
5 4 4 0	1	7 4 1 1	·4
5 5 3 0	1	7 3 3 0	·3
	— 44	7 4 2 0	·3
		7 5 1 0	0
6 3 2 2	6	7 6 0 0	0
6 3 3 1	3		— 4

The next table will enable you to know the probable number of times your long suit will go round.

In 100 leads, supposing that you hold	4	5	6	7	
The suit will not go round once	5	8	13	21	times.
It will go round once only	28	40	53	64	"
Twice only	56	52	34	15	"
Three times	11	0	0	0	"
	100	100	100	100	"

Or in other words, in 100 leads, when you play from	4	5	6	7	
It will go round once or more	95	92	87	79	times.
Twice or more	67	52	34	15	"
Three times	11	0	0	0	"

Once in three times the partner will fail.

The probability of the occurrence of two *independent events* is equal to the product of their separate probabilities. Thus drawing a ten from each of two packs = $\frac{1}{13} \times \frac{1}{13} = \frac{1}{169}$.

As dealer the chances are two to one against dummy holding any one card not in your hand. The probability of his holding two cards not in your hand (say you hold the king of clubs and wish to locate the ace and queen) is as follows:

Chances of his holding both			....	=	105
"	"	"	ace alone ...	=	228
"	"	"	queen alone .	=	228
"	"	"	neither	=	439

The necessity of playing to the score largely affects the question of probabilities. Were there no question of a progressive score we would play, taking the chance of a card lying in a position favorable to us at its mathematical or true value. According to the laws of probability, this value may be expressed by a fraction having for its denominator the total number of possible positions in which the card might lie, and for its numerator the number of positions favorable to us. But with the introduction into the art of the game of the principle of playing to the score it is essential that we should increase or decrease the probability fraction according to the state of the score:

(1) When the game is against you, the offensive attitude is more important than the defensive, and consequently you should overestimate the chances of cards lying in your favor.

(2) Conversely, with the game in your favor, the defensive attitude is more important than the offensive.

(3) With the score even, either attitude is equally important.

Synopsis of the Declarations

UNSOUND declarations are apt to be more heavily punished than unsound play. By bad play, as a rule, a trick or two may be lost, but an unsound declaration may involve the loss of the game and the rubber. On the other hand, the reward for sound declarations is correspondingly greater than the reward for good play.

An attempt is made in this synopsis to cover the whole field of the declarations at love all, by laying down:

(1) A standard minimum of strength on which an *offensive* declaration should be made originally and on a pass.

(2) A standard minimum of weakness on which a *defensive* declaration should be made originally and on a pass.

When once a player knows exactly what to declare at love, he will soon be able to make his declarations fit the varying conditions of the score.

The formulæ given for no trumps, hearts and diamonds are based on the mathematical laws of chance. They may at first sight appear to be too confusing to be applied at the card table. But as most hands do not admit of an alternative declaration, it is only necessary in practice to be acquainted with the Robert-

son rule. In a small percentage of hands, however, there exists a choice between two suits, or it may be a choice between two or more suits and a pass. In such cases it is clearly important to indicate the correct declaration.

Generally speaking, when there is a choice between no trumps and hearts the latter should be selected, because it is an equally attacking declaration and as a rule very much the safer of the two. But when there is a choice between no trumps and diamonds, the latter, although it may be the safer of the two declarations, falls away entirely from the attacking spirit of the deal, and should not, except when the dealer is playing to the score or to the state of the rubber, be selected in preference to no trumps. It is self-evident that with an equal chance of game in two declarations the dealer should make the one that involves the least risk.

OFFENSIVE DECLARATIONS BY THE DEALER AT LOVE ALL

No Trumps

The dealer should declare no trumps when he has *three suits guarded* and his hand comes up to 21 or more according to this scale:

Ace	=	7
King	=	5
Queen	=	3
Jack	=	2
Ten	=	1

This measure of values should not be applied to a singleton ace or king, or an unguarded queen, jack or ten. *But every honor in a guarded suit must be given its full value.*

<div align="center">

Singleton Ace..... = 4
Singleton King ... = 2
Unguarded Queen = 1

</div>

An unguarded jack or ten need not be taken into account.

The minimum for a no-trumps declaration is 21 with three suits guarded.

At love all, or with the score in the dealer's favor, he should not declare no trumps *without an ace* unless his hand totals up to at least 25.

Besides these three-suit no-trumpers there are a large number of hands *not guarded in three suits* which are quite good enough for no trumps. The dealer has a right to expect his partner to hold his fair one-third share of the good cards not in his hand, and if he will not take any chances he is sure to miss golden opportunities.

In the cases of **the Seven Rule** and the **24-point no-trumper** which follows, the chances are decidedly in the dealer's favor.

The Seven Rule

The dealer should go no trumps with:

<div align="center">

4 tricks and 3 suits guarded.
5 "   "   2 "   "
6 "   "   1 suit   "

</div>

The declaration will in fact be theoretically correct, if the number of tricks in hand *plus* the number of suits guarded *come to seven or more*.

The first case is covered by the Robertson rule. In the second case there are two unguarded suits. A five-trick hand should always be regarded as a strong attacking hand, and unless he has decided strength in a red suit, which would certainly be the safer declaration, the dealer should play without trumps.

In the third case, with six or more certain tricks (in a black suit of course), even with three absolutely unprotected suits, the dealer should declare no trumps at love all, or when the score is against him.

A long solid suit of six or more cards gives the dealer a preponderating advantage in playing without trumps, and offers a chance of game that should not lightly be missed.

24-Point No Trumpers

The dealer, although unprotected in two suits, should make it no trumps rather than pass the declaration if his hand totals up to 24.

H. 9 3 2	5 4 2	A K J
D. A Q 3	K J 10 6	8 4 3
C. A K Q 2	9 2	K Q J 2
S. 8 6	A K Q 10	7 6 5

It has already been pointed out that numberless games are lost by timid passes. Hands which in combination would have proved excellent no-trumpers are thrown away on spades when the dealer adopts

the backward policy of leaving it with a hand well over the average. All these hands barely fulfil the condition of totalling up to 24, and yet the chances of success are decidedly in the dealer's favor.

While it is true that no fair opportunity should be missed of playing without trumps, it is a great mistake to suppose that every strong hand is a no-trumper. If the dealer's hand comes to 21 or more by the Robertson rule, and he also holds good hearts, there may be both more profit and more safety in declaring hearts. This declaration is the best of all possible makes, and when there is a choice between hearts and no trumps the former should be selected as being an equally attacking and at the same time safer declaration.

By equally attacking declaration is meant one that offers the same chance of scoring game on the deal. At any stage of the score only one trick more is needed with hearts trumps to score game, and this extra trick, if it cannot be made by utilizing one of dummy's little trumps, is generally secured by bringing in a *long card* through the superior powers of re-entry which a long-trump suit affords.

With strength in trumps the dealer is better able to bring in his or dummy's long cards, and better able to establish his long suits than at no trumps. A long-trump suit affords an excellent protection to a long plain suit, and if any long cards are to be brought in it will be on the side having strength in trumps. The bogey of the *extra trick* is responsible for the loss of many a game and rubber.

Hearts

The dealer should declare hearts if his hand totals up to 18, or more when calculated by this formula.*

<pre>
      For each heart with 5 or less count 2
        "   "   "   " 6 or more "   3
        "   " Ace................. "   4
        "   " King .... "   2
        "   " Queen............. "   1
      For 3 honors .... add 6
        "   4   "   .... " 16
</pre>

This formula will enable the dealer to calculate the exact value of any hand with hearts trumps. Should he, however, obtain a bigger result by calculating the hand according to the Robertson rule, he should of course declare no trumps and *vice versa*.

The formula may at first sight appear to be too confusing to be applied in actual practice at the card

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*This formula is obviously not intended to be applied to a hand containing only three hearts. When the hand contains only four hearts nothing should be added for three honors.

A somewhat more elaborate formula, to ensure greater accuracy, will be found in " The Higher Grammar of Bridge " together with a detailed explanation showing how the formula has been arrived at. It would be comparatively simple to lay down a rule for calculating the trick value of any hand, and to show the different trick values of the same hand in the different declarations. Unfortunately the honor-values of a "heart," a "diamond" and even a "club" hand and the aces in no trumps are disturbing elements which completely destroy the simplicity of the calculation. The beginner need not puzzle over the explanation which follows.

The face value of a trick in hearts is two-thirds the value of a trick at no trumps, but as four tricks are needed to score game from love all in hearts against three tricks in no trumps the relative values from a game-making point of view are as 3 is to 4. These values are, however, further disturbed by the fact that in average positions

table. This is not really so, because the aces, kings and queens have the same values assigned to them as singleton aces and unguarded kings and queens at no trumps.

All that the player need remember is that every heart, other than an honor, counts 2 or 3 according to the length of the trump suit.

The value of three or more honors in hearts is self-evident. Such hands hardly need the formula to be applied to them. So also with six or more hearts, hearts is with very rare exceptions the correct declaration. The formula will, in fact, be useful only in cases of doubt between hearts and no trumps when the hand contains not more than five hearts. Such hands guarded in three suits are the only ones likely to admit of an alternative declaration.

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with five or more cards of a suit the hand will score one trick more in a trump suit declaration than if played without trumps. This is usually the case with five hearts and almost invariably the case with six. So far, therefore, as scoring game on the deal goes, a hearts declaration, if sound, offers the same chance of making game, besides being the safer declaration of the two.

Taking all these facts into consideration, the value of the ace of hearts in no trumps and with hearts as trumps is about the same, *i.e.*, 7. Its value is mainly affected by the length of the trump suit and ranges between 6 and 7. The values of the king and queen of hearts, if deduced in like manner, will be found to range between 4 and 5 and 3 and 4 respectively.

The value of the other hearts depends mainly on the length of the suit. With five trumps in average positions after three rounds the dealer will be left with two long trumps, with six he will be left with three. Each heart may therefore be reckoned as approximately half a trick. According to the length of the suit their value would range between 2 and 3, taking 7 as the standard value of a trick. With five only the value of each heart would be approximately 2, with six or more the value of each heart would be approximately 3.

If we apply the test to the following hands we shall find that many of them just come up to the minimum strength 18, on which it would be sound to declare hearts offensively.

Table of Offensive Heart Declarations

	Trumps						*Plain suits*
1.	J	10	6	5	4	3	
2.	A	9	7	4	3	2	
3.	K	9	7	6	5	3	
4.	A	K	Q	4	3		
5.	A	K	J	4	3		
6.	A	K	10	4	3		
7.	A	Q	J	4	3		
8.	A	Q	10	4	3		
9.	A	J	10	4	3		

It is clear that in ruffing, in affording protection to other friendly cards, in helping to establish the dealer's or dummy's suits, the longer the trump suit the greater the value of each individual trump.

In reckoning the values of aces, kings and queens outside the trump suit it is clear that they lose value by being made in hearts at 8 points each instead of in no trumps at 12 points each. This is especially so with aces. In reckoning the value of, say, the ace of clubs with hearts trumps ($\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 = $\frac{21}{4}$) it should be borne in mind that it has a distinct honor-value in no trumps which it does not possess with hearts trumps. At a liberal estimate, therefore, the value of each ace outside the trump suit in a heart declaration ($\frac{3}{4}$ x 7 — 1) amounts to 4. The values of the king and queen outside the trump suit are about 2 and 1 respectively.

It is obvious that a hand containing *three* honors (which means 16 certain above the line and a probable 32) and a hand containing *four* honors (64 above the line or about two-thirds the rubber bonus 100) have an increased value, which needs to be separately taken into account.

	Trumps					*Plain suits*		
10.	K	Q	J	4	3			
11.	K	Q	10	4	3			
12.	K	J	10	3	2			
13.	Q	J	10	3	2	K	10	2
14.	A	K	4	3	2	K	10	2
15.	A	Q	4	3	2	A	3	2
16.	A	J	4	3	2	A	3	2
17.	K	Q	4	3	2	A	Q	2
18.	K	J	4	3	2	A	K	2
19.	Q	J	4	3	2	A	K	2
20.	Q	10	4	3	2	A	K	Q
21.	A	K	Q	2		A	3	2
22.	A	K	J	2		A	3	2
23.	A	K	10	2		A	3	2
24.	A	Q	J	2		A	Q	2
25.	A	Q	10	2		A	Q	2

Any seven trumps or any four honors is a heart hand unless four aces are held.

The minimum strength necessary for an *offensive* trump declaration is **four reasonably certain tricks,** *two out of which at least should be in the trump suit.**

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*Many authorities hold that the dealer should not declare hearts on five unless his hand *is safe for at least five tricks*. This conservatism is responsible for the large percentage we have noticed in the number of passed declarations. The chances are only one out of eight that the dealer will hold five hearts, and if he waits till his hand "is safe for at least five tricks" it will largely minimize his chances of making an original declaration with a corresponding increase in the number of spade declarations on a pass. We do not for a

With any six trumps or with five trumps to two honors the trump suit is good for at least two tricks, and when the trump suit is lacking in commanding cards some outside support in the other suits is necessary to bring the hand up to the minimum strength *four tricks* necessary for an *offensive* trump declaration.

With more than this strength, if three suits are guarded, there may be a doubt as to whether it would not be more profitable to declare no trumps. But there is danger in exaggerating the value of the no-trumps declaration, *especially when the hand contains good hearts*. With six hearts or with five to three honors hearts is, with rare exceptions, the sounder declaration, because it offers at least the same chance of game without incurring any risks with a missing suit.

The question of hearts *versus* no trumps is one in which the average player is very hazy. With such hands as these the dealer would incur an unnecessary

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moment advise the utterly irresponsible heart declaration with any such hands as these.

Hearts	Spades	Clubs	Diamonds
A 9 8 6 4	K 10 2	Q 3	9 8 4
K 10 8 7 3	J 6 3	K 9 5	10 2
Q J 9 6 2	10 8 5	J 6	A 8 7

If the formula is applied to these hands we shall find that they fall below the minimum 18 and do not offer *a sound expectation of four tricks*.

When the hand contains only four trumps good outside support is needed to bring it up to the required minimum. Such outside support would usually make the hand good enough for no trumps. Hearts should not be declared with four only merely because the hand contains three honors. Numerical superiority in trumps is essential to a sound heart declaration.

risk in declaring no trumps because he has *at least* an equal chance of game in hearts without any risk.

Hearts.	Diamonds.	Clubs.	Spades.
A J 8 6 5 3	K Q J 2	A Q 7	
K J 10 7 4 2	A 6 5	9	A K Q
Q J 10 8 6 4		A K 5 3 2	A K
A K 10 6 5	A 9 2	K Q 6 4	10
A J 10 7 4	9	A 7 6	A 8 3 2
K J 10 8 3	A 6 5	8	A K 7 2

While these hands offer an excellent chance of game at no trumps, they offer an even better chance of game with hearts trumps. At no trumps the adversaries may get five or more tricks before the dealer can get into the lead — they cannot do much damage in his short suit with hearts trumps. The kind of support that would be needed to score game at no trumps would certainly secure the game in hearts without incurring any risk in the missing suit, which may be established against you in no trumps, but which you can ruff out in hearts.

The honor-value of a heart hand is often more important than its trick-value. Points scored above the line will not serve to win the game or rubber, but they will have an important bearing on the ultimate reckoning.

Diamonds

Except with overwhelming strength, many forward players exclude diamonds altogether from the list of original *offensive* declarations with the score love all,

as this make offers a poor chance of game on the deal. This conservatism would be sound if the average number of deals in a rubber were three or four or even five. But experience has shown that the average number of deals in a rubber is seven and a fraction, and that dummy's chances of making a defensive declaration on a pass are about 50 per cent.

If unable to declare no trumps or hearts the dealer should see whether his hand comes up to the minimum 16 for a diamond declaration according to this formula.*

For each diamond count	2
" " Ace "	3
" " King "	1
For 3 honors add......................	4
" 4 " "	12

A weak diamond declaration, except to the score, is a very bad make.

If the hand gives a bigger result when calculated by the Robertson rule the dealer should unhesitatingly declare no trumps. He should not pass the declaration if his hand comes up to the minimum 16.†

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*This formula is *not* intended for a hand that contains only four diamonds not all honors. With less than two honors deduct 4 unless the hand contains six or more trumps.

†The declaration should not be passed at love all with these hands:

Diamonds	Hearts	Clubs	Spades
A Q 9 5 2	A Q 7 3	9 6	10 4
K Q 10 6 3	8 3	K Q 4	8 7
K J 10 8 2	A 7 4	10 6	10 6 3
Q J 10 9 4	7 6	K Q 4	K 9 2
A J 10 7 3	5 4	Q J 2	7 6 3
K 10 9 8 7	A K Q	9 8 7	10 5

Clubs

An *offensive* clubs declaration should as a rule be made only to the score. With the four honors K Q J 10 with or without others *and nothing else in the other suits to justify a more attacking declaration*, the dealer should declare clubs rather than pass the declaration, because the honor score, plus the probable trick score, will be found to be fully equal to the average value of a deal. In all other cases he should leave it to dummy.

Spades

An *offensive* spades declaration should not be made, *except to the score.*

# DEFENSIVE DECLARATIONS BY THE DEALER

The Spade Shield

When the dealer's hand totals up to six or less by the Robertson rule he should declare spades, and not leave it to his partner.

Without a winning card in his hand the dealer should always make it spades unless he holds five clubs to two honors, or any six-card suit headed by

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The odd trick is pretty safe and there is a chance of carrying your score to 18. If you pass the make on these hands the chances are about 8 to 1 against dummy declaring no trumps and about 8 to 1 against his declaring hearts. Your expectation is two tricks in *spades* or the loss of two tricks in *doubled spades*. Instead, therefore, of carrying your score to a useful stage you run the risk of allowing the adversaries to arrive at a useful stage. By being in too great a hurry to score game, you give up the chance of a steady advance and incur the risk of helping the adversaries to make game by giving them a

an honor. With a six-card suit and nothing else in the hand it is clear that the hand is utterly valueless unless the six-card suit be declared trumps. As a measure of protection, therefore, the dealer may be compelled to call hearts, with a hand like this, *when very weak in spades:*
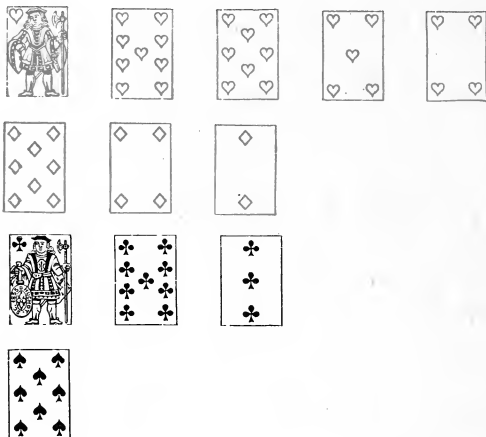
If the dealer declares spades he informs the opponents of the hopeless character of his hand, and he invites them to take advantage of it and most probably to double. By going diamonds or hearts he makes

useful score when they have the deal to go on with. If a rubber were usually decided in three or four or five deals, there would be some urgency in scoring game on the deal. But there are on the average seven deals in a rubber and any declaration that will carry your trick score to a useful stage is *per se* sound.

With five diamonds to three honors it is rarely advisable to pass, but the main test of a diamond hand is that it should be good for five tricks and yet not be good enough for no trumps.

a seemingly attacking though really a protective declaration. He does not, as he would by going spades, give up all chance of a score.

A Defensive Club Declaration by the Dealer

We have seen that when the dealer holds king, queen, jack and ten of clubs, and not another remotely probable trick or any six-card suit, clubs should be declared *defensively* as well as for the sake of the honor score thirty-two.

PASSING THE DECLARATION

The tendency of weak players is to leave the onus of the declaration to dummy. *With a four-trick hand* the dealer should make the most paying declaration he can — no trumps if possible. As a rule, however, at love all, with less strength than the minimum,

21 for no trumps *or* 24 *with only two suits protected*
    (see also the Seven Rule).
18 for hearts,
16 for diamonds, or
4 honors in clubs, as seen above,

he should pass the declaration to dummy, *but only if he holds one trick or a hand that totals up to at least* 7.

As we have already seen, with less than this strength the dealer should make a protective declaration. *At love all 7 should be regarded as an irreducible minimum for passing the declaration.*

OFFENSIVE DECLARATIONS BY DUMMY

At love all dummy should declare, —

No trumps if his hand comes to *at least* 22 by the Robertson rule;

Hearts if his hand totals up to 18 according to the hearts formula;

Diamonds if his hand totals up to 15 according to the diamonds formula.

When an alternative declaration is open to dummy he should calculate the hand by the Robertson rule and the other formulæ stated above, and make the declaration that gives the biggest result.

The *Seven Rule* should be worked with extreme caution on a pass. If dummy holds a five-trick hand, two suits guarded, he should not declare no trumps unless one of the guarded suits is red. If both the guarded suits are red and neither of them sufficiently long to be made trumps, dummy should play without trumps. With only one long established suit, however, the long suit should usually be made trumps.

Spades

With less than the minimum strength, 22 for no trumps, 18 for hearts and 15 for diamonds, dummy should have little hesitation in declaring spades, unless he holds at least six cards in another suit.

Clubs should not be selected in preference to spades unless dummy holds 4 to 3 honors (when weak in spades), 5 to 2 honors, or 6 to 1 honor.

The attempt to score off a poor hand marks the poor player.

The score has been assumed to be love all. It is not sound on a passed make to declare no trumps with less than minimum strength because the opponents are within a few points of game. If the dealer can be trusted to have watched the score before passing it is clear that he does not hold anything like a no-trumper. It is usually best to let the opponents waste a deal in going out. Even in the rubber game a wild no-trumper is unsound; if a risky declaration is to be made it must be made by the dealer. If the chances are against success, rashness on dummy's part will only swell the losses, and there is no certainty that the adversaries *will* go out.

The objects kept in view in making out the formulæ given above are:

(1) To enable a player to know what to declare at love all, by laying down a standard minimum of strength on which certain declarations should be made originally and on a pass.

(2) To show the advantages of a heart declaration when there is a choice between hearts and no trumps.

(3) To point out the disadvantages of a diamond declaration when there is a choice between diamonds and no trumps.

(4) To show the dealer exactly when to use the spade shield.

(5) To correct the tendency of modern bridge to

shoulder dummy with the responsibility of the declaration.

The score has been assumed throughout to be love all, because when a player thoroughly appreciates the declaring value (*i. e.*, the trick-taking *plus* the honor-value) of any hand at love all he will have little difficulty in making his declaration fit the score.

When the hand admits of an alternative declaration the score must decide the make.

The Rules of Bridge

A PLAYER who is not acquainted with the laws of the game is often at a serious disadvantage. He may not care in every case to exact his pound of flesh, but the knowledge will help him to guard against petty transgressions for which the penalties are often over severe. It will be found that a rigid enforcement of the rules in every case will prevent disputes and ensure a close attention to the game; and it will do a player no harm to have some acquaintance with at least the following points of bridge-law:

When a penalty has been incurred the offender is bound to give reasonable time for the decision of his adversaries; but partners may not consult as to whether they will exact a penalty, and when there is a choice of alternative penalties, should they consult they forfeit their right.*

There must be a new deal:

(a) If any card be found faced in the pack.

*There is a difference on this as on other points between the American and English codes. Under the latter, the partners may in all cases decide as to who shall exact a penalty, and they may even consult in the case of a revoke penalty. Under the American code the partner of a player solely entitled to exact a penalty may not in any way suggest or demand its enforcement. Players will do well to be acquainted with "The American Laws of Bridge," adopted by leading clubs November, 1902 (CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK).

(*b*) If any player have dealt to him more than thirteen
    cards.
(*c*) If the dealer deal more than one card at a time.
(*d*) If the pack be proven incorrect or imperfect either
    during the deal or during the play of the hand.
(*e*) If the cards be not dealt into four packets, and the
    last card does not come in its regular order to
    the dealer.

The eldest hand may claim a new deal if, whilst
dealing, a card be exposed by the dealer or his partner.
If, whilst dealing, a card be exposed by either adversary
the dealer may claim a new deal. In either case the
card exposed cannot be called if a new deal does not
take place, nor can the claim for a new deal be made by
a player who has looked at any of his cards.

Any deal out of turn stands good if it is not corrected
before the play of the first card.

The deal also stands good if three players have
thirteen cards each and the fourth have less than thir-
teen and fail to discover the deficiency until after he
has played any of his cards. He is liable for any
revoke he may make in consequence, but he may
search the other pack for the missing card or cards.

The fact of a pack being proven to be incorrect or
imperfect renders the current deal void, but it does
not affect any prior scores and the dealer does not lose
his deal.

Should dummy make the declaration out of turn, or
pass the declaration to the dealer, the eldest hand (1)
may claim a new deal, (2) demand that the trump

shall stand, or (3) compel dummy to declare the trump — provided, in both cases, that no declaration as to doubling has been made.

Should either of the dealer's adversaries make a declaration, the dealer, *after looking at his hand*, may either claim a new deal or take no notice of the intrusive declaration.

The eldest hand has the first right to double and the declarant the first right to redouble. Should the pone double before his partner has asked permission to lead, the declarant may bar the double.

Should the eldest hand lead without his partner's permission the declarer may call a suit or allow the lead to stand, and should pone ask permission to lead, the declarer may call a suit from the eldest hand. But these penalties cannot be claimed if dummy's hand or any part of it has been laid on the table.

As soon as dummy's hand is laid down he can take no further part in the game except that he may ask the dealer if he has none of the suit which he may have renounced. Should he call attention to any incident in the play of the hand in respect of which a penalty may be claimed, the fact of his doing so deprives the dealer of his right to exact such penalty.

Should he draw the dealer's attention to the fact that he is about to lead from the wrong hand, the adversaries shall be entitled to take one trick from the dealer and add it to their own. The dealer incurs the same penalty should he lead out of turn either from his own hand or from dummy.

Should dummy, by touching a card or otherwise, suggest the play of a card from his hand, either of the adversaries may call upon the dealer to play or not to play the card so suggested.

Should the dealer touch or name a card from the dummy hand such card is considered as played; but should he draw a card from his own hand such card is not considered as played until actually quitted.

A card dropped on the floor or elsewhere below the table is not an exposed card, but

(a) Any card dropped on the table face upwards,
(b) Two or more cards played at once,
(c) Every card so held that a player's partner may see it,

are all exposed cards, liable to be called by the dealer, and must be left face upwards on the table.

In the case of two or more cards played at once, the dealer may call any one of them to the current trick, and the other card or cards are liable to be called at any time.

If either of the partners play a winning card out of turn, or play several such winning cards without waiting for his partner to play, the latter may be called upon to win if he can the first or any of those tricks, and the other cards thus improperly played are exposed cards. Should either of them throw his cards face upwards on the table they are also exposed cards liable to be called by the dealer.

Should either of the partners lead out of turn, the

dealer may either call the card led or call a suit when it is next the turn of either adversary to lead, but should the other three follow, the trick is complete and the error cannot be rectified. If only the second or second and third play to the false lead their cards may be taken back and there is no penalty against any one but the original offender.

Dummy is not liable to any penalty for a revoke, and should he revoke the trick stands good if the error be not discovered before the trick is turned and quitted. Should any one of the other three players, holding one or more cards of the suit led, play a card of a different suit, he is liable for each such revoke to have three tricks taken from his score and added to those of the adversaries.

The following points should be carefully noted:

A revoke cannot be claimed after the cards have been cut for the following deal.

The penalty is only applicable to the score of the game in which it occurs, and it may be claimed for as many revokes as occur during a hand.

The accumulated penalty cannot exceed thirteen tricks.

The revoking side cannot score game or attain a higher score towards game in that hand than 28.

A revoke is established if the trick in which it occurs be turned and quitted, or if either the revoking player or his partner has led or played to the following trick.

Should both sides subject themselves to the revoke penalty neither can win the game in that hand.

A player may ask his partner if he has no card of the suit which he has renounced.

If a player correct his mistake in time to save a revoke, the dealer may call the card played in error as an exposed card, or he may call upon the offender to play his highest or lowest card of the suit to the current trick. If the player in fault be the dealer, the eldest hand may require him to play the highest or lowest card of the suit in which he has renounced, provided he is not fourth in hand and both adversaries have played to the trick.

GENERAL

Once a trick is turned and quitted it cannot be seen during the play of the hand, but a player may, while the cards are being gathered up, demand that they be placed before their respective players.

In no case can a player be forced to play a card which would cause him to revoke.

The call of a card may be repeated at each trick until such card has been played.

If a player called on to lead a suit have none of it the penalty is paid.

Should a wrong penalty be demanded, or should the partner of the player solely entitled to exact a penalty suggest or demand its enforcement, no penalty can be enforced.

. . . .

The present code is a great improvement on the earlier ones which were borrowed, not over discrim-

inately, from the laws of whist.   But the laws are still
very imperfect and the penalties prescribed for their
infraction do not in many cases fit the offence.   The
obvious intention of a penalty is to deprive the offender
of any benefit he may derive from irregular play, and
where it is not possible to penalize an offence the
rules must be at fault.

That the present laws should allow irregular in-
timations, albeit unintentional, to escape punishment
shows that there is plenty of room for improvement.*
There is nothing, for instance, to prevent dummy from
deriving a very substantial benefit from information
conveyed to him by undue hesitation on his partner's
part in passing the declaration.

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred such hesita-
tion means that the dealer's hand is somewhat above the
average but he is afraid to risk an expensive declaration,
and dummy, with this information before him, may be
inclined, it may well be unconsciously, to take chances.

The only remedy is to have special rules to govern
the declaration of trumps by dummy.   For instance
he may only declare no trumps if his hand totals up
to 24 or more, counting

<blockquote>
7 for an Ace
5 " a King
3 " " Queen
2 " " Jack
1 " " ten
</blockquote>

*This weak point of all card games played in partnership should
as far as possible be removed.

without regard to the number of suits protected. He may only declare hearts or diamonds with not less than five to two honors, and must in all other cases declare a black suit.

In the same way the eldest hand may convey very useful information by indicating any doubt or perplexity before asking his partner if he may play, and it is only right that the third-hand should not, under the circumstances, be allowed the option of doubling. This option may with advantage be restricted to the player to the declarer's left, but redoubling may be allowed as at present up to a reasonable limit.

As regards scoring, there are many anomalies, and much that favors luck at the expense of skill:

(1) The score for honors is too high and should be reduced.

(2) The inequalities in the trick-values 2 4 6 8 and 12 favor luck at the expense of skill.

(3) The different trick-values should as far as possible be made common measures of the same point.

(4) The fact that it is not possible to score game from love in a black suit tends to increase the length of the rubber, etc.

These and kindred topics will be fully discussed in "The Higher Grammar of Bridge."

Glossary of Terms Used at Bridge

Bring In. — To make tricks with the long cards of a suit after extracting the adverse trumps; or in no trumps, by securing the lead with a card of re-entry after clearing the suit. See *Establish*.

Call, The. — Playing contrary to the ordinary rules of play — an unnecessarily high card followed by a low one of the same suit. It shows that the player has no more cards of the suit and invites a ruff. This convention should not be confounded with the *Reverse Discard*.

Chicane. — When a player holds no card of the trump suit he and his partner score for *chicane* the value of simple honors. *Double Chicane, i. e.*, when both the non-declarant's hands are void of trumps, is equal in value to four honors.

Command of a Suit. — Holding the master or king card of a suit.

Covering. — Playing second in hand a card higher than the one led.

Cross-ruff. — When the partners are trumping each a suit and are leading to each other for the purpose.

Discard. — The card rejected by a player who is not able to follow suit, and does not trump.

Doubling. — Increasing the original value of the tricks. Doubling does not affect the value of honors.

Doubleton. — Two cards only in a suit.

Echo, The. — The echo at Whist was intended to show four or more trumps when the partner led or signalled for trumps. Its place at Bridge is still uncertain.

Eldest Hand. — The player to the left hand of the dealer who has to make the original or opening lead.

Establish. — A suit is established by clearing away obstructing cards. A self-established suit is one that contains all the commanding cards. See *Bring in*.

Exposed Card. — Any card dropped with its face upwards on or above the table; or two or more cards played at once.

False Card. — A card played contrary to the recognized convention of the game with a view to deceive the adversary.

Finesse. — Playing second or third hand an inferior card, with the object of either winning the trick cheaply or of forcing out an adverse high card.

Force. — To compel a player to play a trump to take the trick.

Fourchette. — The two cards immediately higher and lower than the one led. Thus the jack and nine form a *fourchette* to the ten.

Guarded Suit. — A suit is guarded or protected when it contains an ace, or a high card so protected by

smaller ones that it is able to stop an adverse run in the suit at least once. *Guarded second-best* means that the second best for the time being is protected by a small card which may be played to the best card; such as a queen and a small card when the ace has been played.

Holding Up. — Refusing to part with the command of a suit, or to play out the second best card in it.

Honors. — Honors consist of the ace, king, queen, jack and ten of the trump suit. When there are no trumps they consist of the four aces.

King-Card. — The master or best card left unplayed in a suit is called the king-card. Thus if the ace king and queen are out the jack would be the king-card.

Little Slam. — Winning twelve tricks out of the thirteen.

Long Suit. — A suit of four or more cards.

Long Trumps. — The last trumps unplayed held by a player.

Long Cards. — The last cards of a suit held by a player after the rest of the suit have been played.

Loosing-Card or Loose Card. — One that cannot take a trick in its suit, and should if possible be got rid of to enable a player to trump the suit when necessary.

Master-Card. — See *King-Card.*

Major-Tenace. — A combination of the ace and queen of a suit in the same hand.

Minor-Tenace. — A combination of the second and fourth best cards.

Opening-Lead. — The original or blind lead made by the eldest hand before dummy's hand is exposed.

Penultimate Lead. — Leading the lowest card but one of a suit in order to show that the lead is from more than four cards. This lead, although sometimes employed, is of no value at Bridge.

Peter, The. — See *The Call*.

Plain Suit. — Any suit other than the trump suit.

Pone. — The player to the dealer's right, also called the *younger* or *third-hand*.

Quart. — A sequence of any four cards of a suit.

Quart-Major. — A sequence of the four highest cards of a suit.

Quitted. — A card is quitted when it has left the hands of a player. A trick is quitted when the four cards of which it is composed have been collected and left face downwards on the table.

Quint. — A sequence of any five cards of a suit.

Quint-Major. — A sequence of the five highest cards of a suit.

Re-entry. — Winning a trick to secure the lead. Also applied to a card that will enable a player to take the lead at an advanced stage of the game.

Renounce. — To play a card of a suit other than the one led.

Revoke. — To trump or to play a card of a suit other than the one led *having a card of the suit led*. The laws do not admit of a player revoking intentionally.

Rubber. — Two games won in succession, or two games won out of three by the same partners.

Ruff. — To trump a plain suit of which you do not hold a card.

Seesaw or Saw. — See *Cross-ruff*.

Sequence. — Three or more cards of a suit in consecutive order. A sequence may be an *under* sequence, that is, one at the bottom of the suit, or it may be an *intermediate* sequence, or a *head* or *master* sequence. A *head* sequence of three cards is called a *tierce major*, of four cards a *quart major*, and of five cards a *quint major*.

Short-Suit. — Any suit of not more than three cards.

Singleton. — One card only in a suit.

Slam or Grand Slam. — Winning all thirteen tricks.

Strong Suit. — One that contains two or more high cards — not necessarily a long suit.

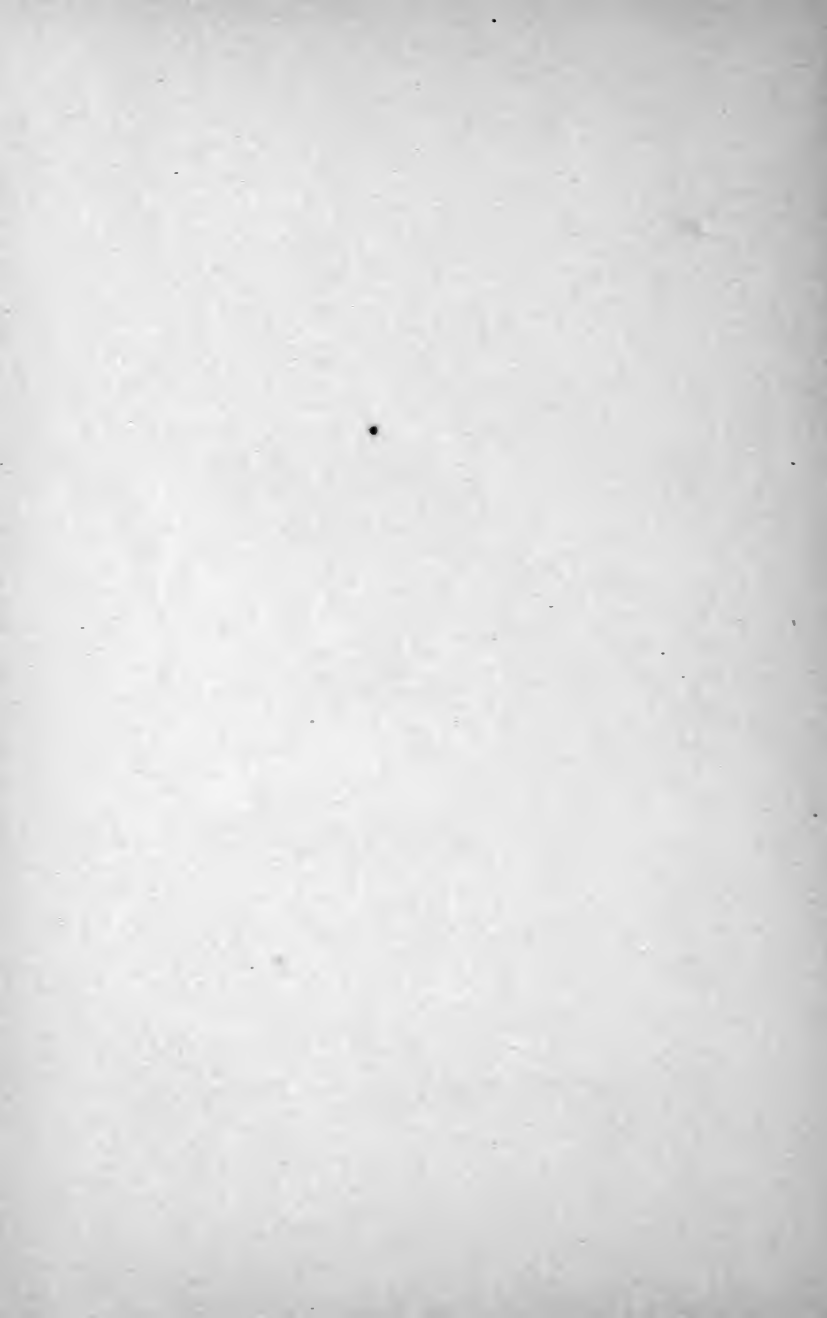**Tenace.** — A combination of the best and third-best unplayed cards of a suit.

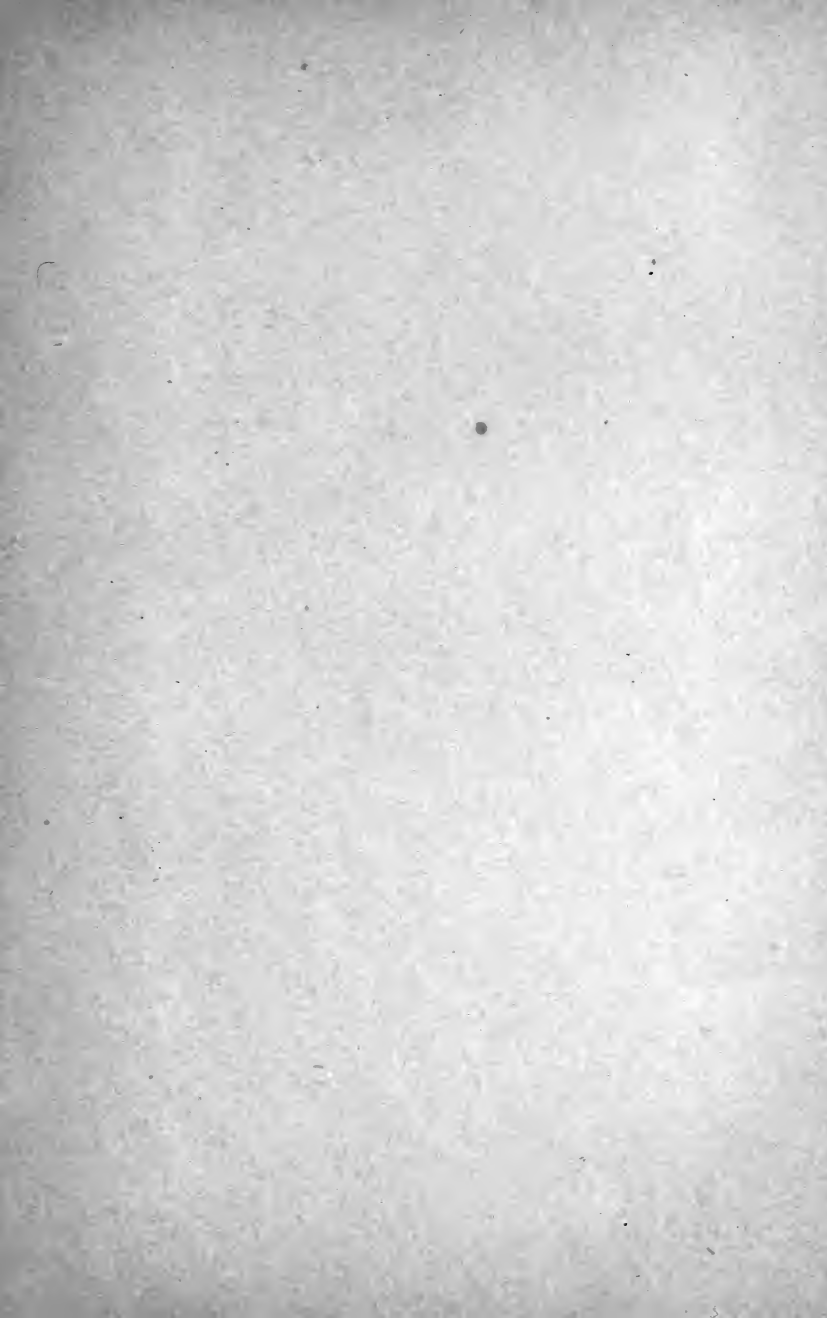**Third-Best.** — The third highest card of a suit, counting from the top.

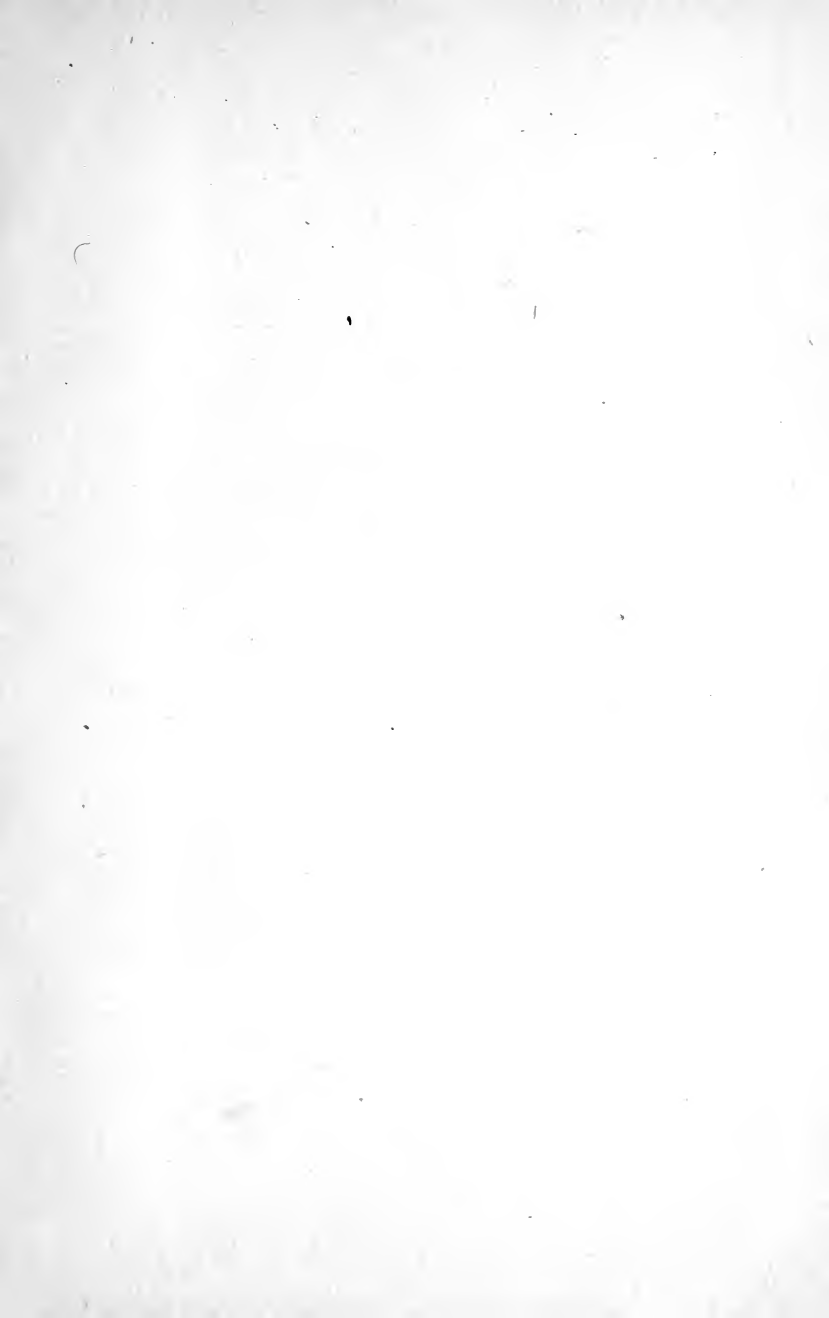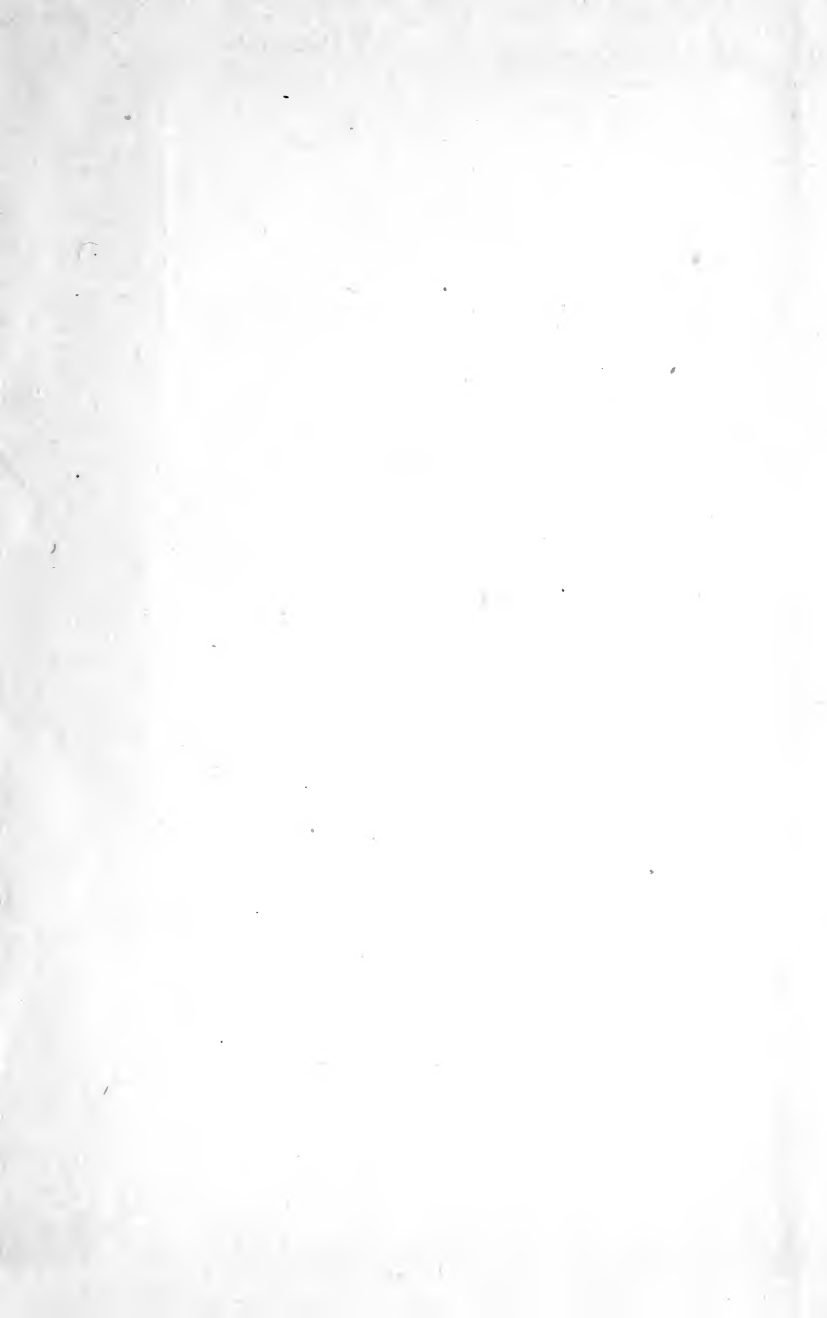**Weak Suit.** — One containing no high cards.

Younger Hand. — See *Pone*.